RECOLLECTIONS OF LENIN

LENIN IN HIS STUDY IN THE KREMLIN (1918)

RECOLLECTIONS OF LENIN

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ВОСПОМИНАНИЯ
О ЛЕНИНЕ

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G. M. KRZHYZHANOVSKY

VLADIMIR ILYICH

I

During the lifetime of Vladimir Ilyich he would have been the most congenial subject for all of us who had the good fortune to be in close touch with him; we, who had lived and worked with him, must certainly have understood and sensed before others what manner of man was working alongside us. But the great modesty that was inherent in Lenin did not permit us to speak of him.

Today, when the strong ties linking him with the broadest mass of the people are clear to all, when the whole world speaks of him, it is hard for us to talk of him for a completely different reason: we simply cannot reconcile ourselves to the fact that he has left us for ever.

Now, of course, it is clear to all that in Vladimir Ilyich we have lost a man who was extraordinarily close to millions of ordinary working people, a personality completely exceptional in its gifts, traversing a historic path whose great significance is beyond dispute—as also is the fact that our country has not to this day produced his like.

However, it is not so easy to penetrate the secret of this man's genius, or to reveal the fundamental features of his personality in a way which will correctly indicate

those special characteristics which raised him so high above us all.

When from time to time in mankind's history people appear who like a pillar of fire reveal the road of life to others, and when we call such people men of genius, we are frequently unable to explain the nature of their genius. Let us recollect how a genius is described.

There is, for example, this definition: genius is a unique and felicitous accumulation of positive characteristics in a human personality. Genius is an obvious example of how quantity is transformed into quality. Here we have simply a fine, capable, talented person; add to this a certain something, comparatively small, but of special importance in the given combination of qualities, and already we have not merely a talented person, but a person gifted to the point of genius. But to say this in general is to say nothing. It is no explanation of the secret of genius.

There is another definition: genius is a special form of industriousness, almost always the result of tremendous, concentrated work. But we immediately recollect that we know many very hard-working people who have nothing in common with genius. We must clearly acknowledge that a general definition of genius is an incorrect presentation of the problem, which can only be solved in relation to an absolutely specific case; in so doing, we shall obtain completely different answers in relation to different people.

If the problem is considered in this light, then the special difficulty of presenting so great a figure as that of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin at its full stature must be acknowledged. I shall not take the resolving of it upon myself, but will restrict myself merely to the selection of some of the material. It is a task both great and difficult: "Perhaps the years will finish the unfinished portrait." At first sight he did not impress. But remember

what Marx said of the features distinguishing proletarian from bourgeois revolutions. If it is true that the very essence of the movement of the poletariat excludes external magic and theatrical dramatization in the actions of the main hero of these revolutions—the popular masses —then are we not also justified in expecting a special simplicity in those to whose lot it falls to play the historic role of real leaders of the proletariat? In any event, this absence of theatrical external show was characteristic of Vladimir Ilyich.

Let us begin with the simple, modest externals of Vladimir Ilyich. You could easily lose sight of him, short, wearing an ordinary cap, in any factory district. A pleasant dark face with a certain eastern cast—that is about all that one could say of his appearance. You could with equal facility lose sight of Vladimir Ilyich, wearing some peasant overcoat, in any crowd of Volga peasants—there was in his appearance that something that seemed to flow directly from these rank-and-file people, as if he were their kith and kin. But one had only to look into the eyes of Vladimir Ilyich, unusual, penetrating dark-brown eyes, full of inner force and energy, to begin at once to sense that here was no ordinary man. The majority of his pictures are unable to convey that impression of special gifts which quickly replaced first impressions based on his simple exterior once you began to examine his features more closely. It was not for nothing that one well-known French sculptor, who certainly did not foresee Vladimir Ilyich's future contribution to history, was however so favourably impressed by the excellence of the features of his brow that he virtually persecuted Vladimir Ilyich while he was in Paris with proposals to model his head which, in the artist's opinion, had a special spiritual beauty. He found a great similarity between the features of Lenin's brow and those in sculptures of Socrates, the great thinker of ancient times.

But the spiritual essence of Vladimir Ilyich was expressed with much greater force in dealings with people than in external appearance. More than once accompanying Lenin to meetings with people who had not known him earlier, I always foresaw what invariably happened. Wherever Vladimir Ilyich appeared, in whatever milieu, once he expressed himself on the matter in hand, you could say beforehand that he would become the centre of attention. He used no cheap, loud words; all he said was so weighty and significant, so apt and expressive, that the exceptional talent of a man able to speak thus became clear to all.

Recollections of Tolstoi sometimes stress that he could, by going over to impeccable English or French at the appropriate moment, make those who infringed upon intimacy with him sense the distance which separated him from them. Vladimir Ilyich, without going over to French or English, nevertheless had a similar gift, but to a still greater degree: a true friend and considerate comrade towards his real friends, towards the workers of that proletarian party to which he indivisibly devoted all his life, he was everywhere and always the irreconcilable enemy of every kind of philistinism, of every sort of compromise with stagnation and indifference, whatever form it assumed. In his company, without any apparent effort on his part, some sort of special atmosphere of purity and elevation was created; frivolous chatter, the idle and the vulgar word came to be out of place.

A simple exterior, but extraordinarily attractive by reason of its inner light of spiritual beauty; his speech, simple but so composed as to indicate immediately the concentrated, unusual strength of his intellect—these are, of course, but a few of the individual traits of Vladimir Ilyich's brilliant personality. His immense capacity for work, his varied talent (not for nothing was he for many years the best student at his Gymnasium) and his great

reserves of physical strength are also undoubted. There is indeed something strange about reading—and reading more than once—recollections of his physical strength in biographical accounts. His short figure does not seem to fit in with the general conception of strength. But nevertheless it was so: in this short, compact frame was the fountainhead of the vital energy not only of a spirit, but also of a strong, healthy and physically normal man. I remember during out Siberian exile when I told Vladimir Ilyich of the definition of a healthy man given by the then well-known surgeon Albert Billroth, according to whom health is expressed in clarity of emotional activity, he was extraordinarily delighted by it.

"Just so," he said, "if a healthy man wants to eat, then he wants to do it properly; if he wants to sleep, he doesn't worry whether it's a soft bed or not; and if he hates—well, he does that properly too...." I glanced at the bright glow of his cheeks and the sparkle of his dark eyes and thought to myself: "Here, indeed, is a splendid example of just such a man."

But our life on earth is short. Therefore happy are those who find their aim and purpose in life in early youth. Is not this life's greatest good fortune? If this is indeed so, then such good fortune was Vladimir Ilyich's in full measure. He told me that already in the Fifth Form of his Gymnasium he had done with every sort of religious question: he took the cross and threw it into the dustbin. When I first met him as a young man of 23, here was a still not fully shaped, but already clearly etched figure of a whole man, destined to demonstrate the extraordinary strength of his inner integrity before the whole world.

In my mind's eye I see scenes of St. Petersburg and its student revolutionary circles of the early 1890's. I will try, from the example of this first period of his activity, to show what exactly were the aspirations of this unusual

young man. It seems to me that special bent of his exceptional personality, which made the great Lenin of the gifted, energetic Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, will then to a certain extent become apparent. We consider scientific socialism the greatest and most important science for the workers. It gives the key to an understanding of the main thing: how to live, how to fight in order to change, to transform life itself so that instead of a struggle of each against all it shall become a harmonious, joyful and fraternal social order. It was the works of Marx and Engels which forged mighty weapons for the workers in their struggle to carry through the arduous transition from capitalism to socialism. But the course of West-European political events was such that the 80's and 90's of the last century were years of comparative calm in the class struggle. True, Engels asserted that during these years of gradual evolution the German Social-Democratic Party took on a healthy hue; but in the final analysis the valuable weapon forged by those great smiths of the future, Marx and Engels, was, by the efforts of that self-same Social-Democracy, stored away as a reserve in the inoffensive armoury of this "legal opposition."

But here in our Northern plains appeared an unusual man who, more than any other, understood the power of the weapon forged by Marx's genius. For him a Marxist was above all a revolutionary. Like a storm he burst into this armoury where the reserve weapons of German Social-Democracy were stored, throwing down the armour from the walls, throwing wide the windows and doors, ringing the tocsin and rallying to his side millions of workers, arming them with the sword of Marxism for the struggle with capitalism and its creatures—a struggle to the death. This was Ulyanov-Lenin.

The finest policy is that of principle. In that sense, superbly equipped with the guiding principles of Marx, Lenin was a splendid politician.

But a splendid politician must also have that special sense which we call the flair for reality. By his activity during three Russian revolutions, Vladimir Ilyich set us the clearest example of the most penetrating grasp and comprehension of reality.

In 1889, a 17-year-old youth, still mentally an unlicked cub, I came to Petersburg and became a student at the Technological Institute. In my second year I joined the Left wing among the students. I remember that I and my new friends were at first full of some undefined but strong desire to "burn our boats"—to break with that philistinism that had nurtured us, who had come together under one roof from every corner of the country. Threads linking us with recollections of the struggle of the hero-revolutionaries who had traversed their "valorous and noble path" in that same city reached us in various ways. The first seekings of the *raznochintsy** of the 60's, in the fading pages of *Sovremennik* (*The Contemporary*) and *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* (*Fatherland Notes*), the condemnatory writings of Saltykov-Shchedrin, the freedom-loving brilliance of Mikhailovsky's articles, the weighty sermonizing of Lavrov,** odd pamphlets of the *Zemlya i Volya* (*Land and Freedom*) and the *Narodnaya Volya* (*People's Will*),*** and finally, in the springtime of our lives, that amazing clarion call from the publications of the "Emancipation of Labour"

* *Raznochintsy*—intellectuals of non-aristocratic origin, coming to the fore in the mid-19th century in Russia, whose representatives played an important part in the revolutionary movement and in the development of science, literature and art.—*Ed.*

** N. Mikhailovsky and P. Lavrov—ideologists of Narodism, a social trend coming to the fore in the 70's of the last century in Russia among the revolutionary-minded petty-bourgeois intelligentsia and directed against tsarism and the oppression of the landlords. In the 90's Narodism became a reactionary liberal trend.—*Ed.*

*** *Zemlya i Volya* (1876-79) and *Narodnaya Volya* (1879-81) —Narodnik organizations.—*Ed*

group*—this was the literary ladder by whose rungs we underwent our transformation from vague lovers of the people to clear-cut Marxists. Like a rock marking the watershed along the route, stood Marx's great work *Capital.*

Turning over its pages, we for the first time began to feel firm ground beneath our feet and found a basis for criticism of every kind of Narodism, whatever revolutionary colours it might assume. Marxism spread quickly among our group of mainly technology students.

When meeting new people, we first found out about their attitude to Marx. I personally, for example, was firmly convinced that no good could ever come of anyone who had not gone through Marx's *Capital* two or three times! Unfortunately almost similar exacting demands were made not only upon student heads, but also upon the brains of those workers with whom we were already trying to establish contacts, organizing them in regular propaganda circles. When I recollect how we tormented our first working-class friends with the "frock-coat" and the "sackcloth" from the first chapter of *Capital,* I to this day feel pangs of conscience! Our revolutionary workers' circles were overburdened with work of a purely educational nature, a trend encouraged by the great spiritual thirst which gripped forward-looking workers at that time.

Lenin's arrival in autumn 1893 was like an invigorating clap of thunder. From that moment we began a new life. Returning that autumn from my summer practical work in a factory, I found all my circle in a state of unusual animation simply because our new friend, Vladimir Ulyanov, who had come to us from the banks of

* The "Emancipation of Labour" group—the first Russian Marxist group organized by G. V. Plekhanov in Geneva in 1883 which carried out much work in the dissemination of Marxism in Russia.—*Ed.*

the Volga, had in the shortest possible time come to occupy the centre of attention in our circle. The very fact that he was the brother of Alexander Ilyich Ulyanov, one of the last renowned members of the *Narodnaya Volya,* executed in 1887, ensured him of a friendly reception in our midst. Looking back and recalling the face of the then 23-year-old Vladimir Ilyich, I now clearly see in it special features of an amazing spiritual "tidiness" and order, of that constant flame which equally marks a constant readiness for action and self-sacrifice, if need be, the ultimate sacrifice. It may be that this derived directly from his domestic tragedy, from his heroic brother: his link with the preceding heroic revolutionary struggle was in this way different from ours. However, we—Marxists to the point of pedantry—were much more impressed by his amazing ability to master the weapon of Marxism and his first-class, absolutely amazing acquaintance with the country's economic position, derived from the primary sources of statistical handbooks.

My first meeting with Vladimir Ilyich took place in the flat of Z. P. Nevzorova, when he was giving a lecture on markets to our circle. Vladimir Ilyich's lecture shone with such rich statistical illustrations that I experienced a curious feeling of tremendous satisfaction, seeing how formidable a weapon Marxism gave us in the understanding of the economic life of our own country. Several members of our group were even to some extent shocked by this unusually concrete approach to so theoretical a subject as that of the creation of a market for developing capitalism. On the basis of the facts of Russia's national economy Vladimir Ilyich overthrew all their confused, artificial theories about the development of capitalist economy.

Because of his receding hairline and great erudition, Vladimir Ilyich received the nickname "Starik" (the Old Man)—a nickname which contrasted sharply with his

youthful agility and the spring of young energy which bubbled in him. But that profound knowledge which this young man employed so freely, that special tact and that critical skill with which he approached vital questions and the most varied people, his unusual ability to make himself at home among workers, to whom his approach, as has been correctly noted by Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya, was not that of an arrogant teacher but above all that of a friend and comrade—all this made permanent that nickname which we had thought up for him. After a few months' acquaintance with this unique "Starik" I began to detect in myself a feeling of some special fullness of life in his company and in friendly conversation with him. When he was away, somehow colours faded and thoughts flew after him.

Having settled down among us, Vladimir Ilyich was not long in revolutionizing our ways. He first of all demanded a change-over from "over-profound" study with a small circle of selected workers to activity influencing the broad masses of the St. Petersburg proletariat—that is, a transition from propaganda to agitation. To this end he united all the St. Petersburg workers' Marxist circles into one "League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class."

Beginning with the winter of 1894, the St. Petersburg police-spy apparatus became increasingly familiar with the "seditious" literature of "anonymous leaflets" which, despite their primitive, duplicated form, began to become an extremely noticeable and common feature of the city's biggest factories and mills. In these leaflets, based on our talks with the workers, we sought to take into account their day-to-day needs, the actual situation in a particular factory, going over as swiftly as possible to slogans of a political nature clearly flowing from the obstacles which the tsarist government placed in the way of the workers' fight for their economic well-being. Brief

street-corner and factory-gate meetings, regular May Day demonstrations and, finally, the creation of a permanent printed journal were the things which must naturally spring from the tasks set by the slogan of agitation. We of course knew that contacts with the workers, even in circles of a purely propagandist character, must inevitably end in great losses for our first group in unequal grapple with that highly-developed police apparatus of which contemporary "official" St. Petersburg was the personification. The change-over to wider contacts with the working masses, to which Vladimir Ilyich was urging us by his calls for agitation, was assuredly fraught with still greater danger of this kind, and it could be foreseen that arrest and imprisonment would be our inescapable fate. This made Vladimir Ilyich's attacks upon the characteristically intellectual laxity in our personal relations all the more justifiable. We were clearly at fault in that we frequently dropped in upon each other not for matters of importance but simply to have a "heart-to-heart chat"; at that time our security measures were indeed extremely primitive.

In 1895 Vladimir Ilyich suffered from serious inflammation of the lungs and it was necessary for him to spend some time abroad to be cured. However the main purpose of the trip was to establish direct contact with the "Emancipation of Labour" group. You will readily appreciate how important this trip was for us and with what impatience we awaited his return. Finally the long-awaited day came, and our "Starik," impulsive and agile as quicksilver, was once more back among us. He vividly described the impressions he had received from his meetings with Plekhanov, Axelrod and Zasulich, the leaders of the "Emancipation of Labour" group. But his account of meetings with the Paris proletariat lingers in my memory with much greater clarity. The French mass-worker, by his general cultural level, his quick perception

and his comradely sociability, represented, in the words of Vladimir Ilyich, human material with which the hopes of Marxist revolutionaries might most naturally be linked. A letter from Plekhanov to Struve which became known to us later refers to this trip abroad and describes the impression which Vladimir Ilyich produced upon the "Emancipation of Labour" group. During his many years' stay abroad, Plekhanov wrote, many people had come to him from Russia, but of none did he entertain such hopes as those he had for the young Ulyanov. So far as I remember, he noted the remarkable erudition of Vladimir Ilyich, the integrity of his revolutionary outlook and his bubbling energy.

Vladimir Ilyich's trip abroad was by no means of a purely platonic character. It was from that time that we entered into direct contact with the "Emancipation of Labour" group and with the aid of that contact we certainly did not delay in extending the circle of our Russian acquaintances. Our contact with the Social-Democratic circles in Nizhni-Novgorod, Moscow, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Vilno and several Volga towns dated from this time. Vladimir Ilyich also delighted us with yet another gift from abroad: by means of a false bottom in his suitcase he had succeeded in bringing a duplicator—then coming into use—across the frontier. It later played no small part in the education of the St. Petersburg proletariat.

Vladimir Ilyich was already a prolific writer, and he filled voluminous note-books with his fine, beady handwriting, particularly assailing the pathetic "heroes" of contemporary Narodism. Our agitational leaflets also made great demands upon us and the possibility of literary collaboration with the "Emancipation of Labour" group was also assured. In this way, naturally, the idea of publishing a special workers' newspaper suggested itself to us. Unfortunately, the first issue of *Rabocheye*

LENIN
(from a photograph taken in 1890 or 1891)

Delo (Workers' Cause), painstakingly edited and three-quarters written by Vladimir Ilyich himself, went not to the print-shop but straight into the hands of the gendarmes. Incidentally, this number laid down a completely correct line for Social-Democratic work for a whole decade. On the basis of the factual material reaching us from the mills and factories of St. Petersburg, we sought to raise the consciousness of the St. Petersburg proletariat to the point at which the need for a revolutionary workers' political party would become obvious of itself, and we did it in a way which even now seems to me to have been a very competent manner. To the best of my knowledge the bulk of the copy for that issue of *Rabocheye Delo* did not survive, like many other manuscripts by Vladimir Ilyich which were then circulating among the St. Petersburg revolutionary circles. But, fortunately, three-quarters of the pamphlet entitled *What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats* did. The clarity and force of its analysis and its prophetic foresight make it absolutely amazing. When you read it today, it still breathes freshness, although it was written 60 years ago. The role of the working class in Russia and in the fate of the Russian revolution, its link with the peasantry, the direct, open road of political struggle and the prevision of the victorious outcome of the communist revolution in Russia, the inevitable link between our revolution and the fate of the world proletarian revolution—all this is clearly and vividly set down. But it also reveals another aspect of Vladimir Ilyich—the dread polemicist, overthrowing all who stand in the way of the awakening of independent proletarian revolutionary thought, all who in one way or another distort the proletariat's understanding of its great historic role.

That was how Vladimir Ilyich impinged upon my consciousness during the first period of my St. Petersburg

meetings with him. We see that he quickly found his way, quickly found that line, resolute adherence to which made him the great friend and leader of the working masses. He knew how to concentrate all his amazing capacity for work, all the energy of his passionate spirit, upon the achievement of one all-consuming aim: the organization and awakening of the mass of the revolutionary proletariat, an effective awakening for the immediate transformation of the very fundamentals of life, of relations between man and man in the social process of production.

II

Towards the end of winter 1895 thunder-clouds were obviously gathering over us. The worst thing of all was that police shadowing sometimes took on a somewhat puzzling form. You would come out of the house, seeking to cover your tracks according to all the rules of security, and then suddenly at some distant point along your route you would catch sight of a figure which seemed to have sprung up out of the ground—clearly your "tail." Later we should have reacted to such symptoms in a more practical manner by changing identity documents and area of operations. But at that time we were still inexperienced novices. Add to that our natural youthful fervour which preferred direct frontal attack in all daring undertakings and was unwilling to consider compromises suggested by "cold reason." Be that as it may, late at night on December 8, 1895, we found ourselves in that curious building on the Shpalernaya Street known as the St. Petersburg "Predvarilka" (House of Preliminary Detention—in Russian, Dom Predvaritelnogo Zaklyucheniya). We were destined to spend 14 months within its walls. The transition from active revolutionary work to

the tormenting regime of absolute solitary confinement coupled with depressing thoughts about the misfortunes of one's relatives and the extremely dismal prospects for the immediate future, could not be anything but difficult.

Confinement in jail destroyed two of our number utterly: A. Vaneyev contracted acute t.b. which quickly brought him to the grave, while P. Zaporozhets was seized by an incurable form of persecution mania. For me personally and for the majority of the other comrades friendship with Vladimir Ilyich brought invaluable salvation and support. Despite the extremely severe regime at that time in force in the "Predvarilka," we nonetheless succeeded, through the prison library and through friends who came to visit us, in establishing close contacts with each other.

I am now unable to reproduce my lively jail correspondence with Vladimir Ilyich, but one thing I clearly recall: to get and read a letter of his was the same as draining down some especially invigorating, stimulating drink; one felt spiritually revived and sustained immediately. There was in him an immense spiritual wealth, an ability to influence favourably and in the desired way the mood of a person standing in need, that alone would in any circumstances, but especially in jail, have made him an absolutely irreplaceable comrade.

The cell windows in the House of Preliminary Detention were so disposed that in order to see the prison yard through their grills it was necessary to pull oneself up a good way, which made such an operation no easy matter, especially since warders were constantly on the watch through spy-holes in the heavily-barred doors to prevent such attempts. But all the forces of evil in the world could not restrain me from such an attempt when, according to my observations, Vladimir Ilyich was in that part

of the exercise cage that was visible from my window. He too knew that the chances for such a long-range meeting were great, and we immediately entered into conversation by means of hand signals, using the prison alphabet. And even now in my memory's eye I see his dear face, those hasty signals and the involuntary glance in the direction of the sullen guard pacing the centre of the exercise circle. I recall how he looked my way with a special fixity and swiftly signalled: "The Ukrainian is beneath you!" I jumped down to the floor of my depressing cell and through the narrow aperture surrounding the central heating pipe called to my neighbour. Our most skilled conspirator, the late S. I. Radchenko, greeted me in a muffled voice: "Surely you're not here?" Yes, the prison authorities had this time indeed slipped up: prisoners involved in the same case found themselves next to each other, without the customary criminal "insulation," and Vladimir Ilyich was quick to take advantage of the situation. The Prosecutor and the gendarmerie were doubtless not a little surprised by the similarity between the evidence of the newly-arrested Radchenko and our own, and by his familiarity with our trial, which could come about only as a result of so felicitous a proximity.

Keeping in the closest contact with us all, Vladimir Ilyich at the same time did not leave those at liberty without his influence. During this time he wrote a whole series of leaflets and a pamphlet about the strikes, which unfortunately did not appear in print because of the failure of the Lakhta print-shop of the *Narodnaya Volya* Party, and started work on the substantial *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, which he finished while in exile and which appeared over the pseudonym V. Ilyin.

During the whole 14 months of my imprisonment I never once met Vladimir Ilyich in any of the long corridors of the "Predvarilka." The emergence of any of us

for exercise or interrogation was accompanied by the operation of a whole system of precautionary measures, even including prolonged whistling to warn the jailers in other intersecting wings of the danger of a meeting. But when whole baskets of books were carried along those corridors, I well knew that their devourer could be none other than Vladimir Ilyich. He had an amazing faculty for becoming intimately acquainted with a book with unbelievable rapidity even during the most cursory inspection; as the saying goes, seek and you shall find. He would thumb through a voluminous work before your eyes and immediately find the quotations which carry the author into clear water. And if you take a book read through by him and spattered with marginal notes and apt underlining, you simply won't be able to get away from Vladimir Ilyich's criticism which slips in with those poisoned and exceptionally pointed interjections: "Hm! Hm!" "Ha, Ha!" and so on.

It is not necessary to dwell upon how striking was the example of study which Vladimir Ilyich set us in prison and how together with him we tried to make use of our captivity as a sort of "super-university." He played an even greater role in this connection for all our circle during the years of exile.

We were the first Social-Democrats to arrive in Eastern Siberia, and all the old exiles viewed us with mingled curiosity and mistrust. It was Vladimir Ilyich who particularly clearly exemplified the new type of revolutionary fighter.

Vladimir Ilyich, V.V.Starkov and I were condemned to three years' stay in the Minusinsk okrug. Starkov and I were sent to the village of Tesinskoye, while Vladimir Ilyich went to Shushenskoye, more than 60 miles away. This did not prevent us from establishing regular communications, and Vladimir Ilyich was a particularly good correspondent. We got letters from him about

twice a week, and as a result were kept informed about his own work and about all that he learnt through his own extensive correspondence. This correspondence arose not only because his letters were always very much to the point, invariably giving in a laconic form a carefully considered reply dealing with the very essence of the themes touched upon, but also because of his unusual punctuality and self-discipline in this respect: he could send a pungent, polemical reply to a letter which he had received; to remain silent or, even more, to send just any old answer to the queries he received he considered intolerable.

I recall with great sorrow that the pile of letters which Vladimir Ilyich sent me during exile was destroyed as a result of the harassments and constant police dangers which later came my way. They would have served as valuable material for an account of the immense preparatory work in which Vladimir Ilyich immersed himself during his exile. We discussed questions linked with the varied themes of the book which he was then engaged in writing, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, the varied new Russian and German publications which reached us, as well as everything that at the time seemed to us to be important and relevant. This correspondence would, I think, by no means badly, have demonstrated yet another of Vladimir Ilyich's characteristics, that which expressed itself in the peculiar gift and ability to get right to the very heart of any question, without any beating about the bush. It was this quality which determined the exceptional simplicity and lucidity of his written language. It would certainly be difficult to find another writer who so closely followed the advice of the poet Nekrasov: "Let thoughts range wide, but keep words on a tight rein."

From the recollections of Shushenskoye peasants published in the press it is obvious what impression they

gained from the exceptionally industrious, correct regime which Vladimir Ilyich observed during exile. His legal education and his constant poring over books, his ability to answer any question and to give prompt legal advice quickly brought him the reputation of being an unusual man.

It was, I think, during my very first year of exile that I succeeded on one pretext or another in obtaining permission to spend several weeks at Shushenskoye, and my stay with Vladimir Ilyich lives vividly in my memory. At that time he was still living in complete solitude, and his working day, planned right down to the very last minute, consisted of an excellent rotation of large portions of work with correct and exactly adequate allocations for necessary leisure. In the mornings Vladimir Ilyich would usually have an uncommon amount of physical strength and energy, and was by no means against wrestling and "letting off steam," for which reason it more than once fell to my lot to take him on in single combat—until my very active resistance had cooled him down. Then, after a short morning stroll, our study routine began. Certain hours were allocated for literary work, to the preparation of material from statistical handbooks, to studies in philosophy, to the reading of economic literature—both our own and from the West—while for relaxation we read fiction.

Of course we received our newspapers when they were very much out of date and in great numbers at a time. But Vladimir Ilyich contrived to systematize even their reading: he arranged it so that every day he read only the issues which corresponded to the time-lag, falling due on the day in question. Thus, it came about that he "received" a newspaper every day, only with a great delay. And when I tried to upset this journalistic rhythm, maliciously reading out reports from later issues, he

covered his ears and energetically defended the merits of his system.

Vladimir Ilyich was a great lover of frosty, fresh air, sharp walks, skating, chess and hunting. And what a lively, sociable companion he was during such relaxation in the fresh air or during a chessboard battle!

Thus the weeks of our exile went by one after the other, and the steady rhythm of this unusual man's intense work, who, as we saw, allowed not a single day to go by without in some way or another moving further forward in the sense of enlarging his mental equipment, had its influence upon us, stimulating and reinvigorating us in a most uncommon fashion. In his company, each wanted to be better than he was, and at the same time was drawn closer to this vivid, vital person.

I have no intention here to describe "the life and times" of the exiles in Minusinsk. I will merely note that our Social-Democrat contingent headed by Vladimir Ilyich served as the apple of discord among them. The whole of this little universe was split into two, the whole of the working public finding itself on our side. When the manifesto of Madame Kuskova, her well-known *Credo* in which she sought to demonstrate the rashness of political activity among the proletariat, for whom the near future was alleged to hold only economic struggle in store, while the political struggle was a matter for those "with clean fingernails"—Messrs. the liberals and sundry sorts of intellectuals—reached us in the Minusinsk steppes, it produced most varied reactions among the exiles. Vladimir Ilyich alone correctly appreciated the fatality of such a distortion of the proletarian consciousness, linked with such *khvostism* and cringing before Russian liberalism, and the utter myopia of these allegedly practical adherents of economic action. The vigorous repudiation of the author of the *Credo*, sent to

all parts of Russia in the form of a letter signed by 17 exiles in Eastern Siberia, was entirely his work. At such moments, Vladimir Ilyich was invariably on the alert, and invariably seethed with indignation against such an opponent.

Exile was coming to an end. Before it did so I received permission to work on the Siberian railway. One of my last walks with Vladimir Ilyich along the banks of the broad Yenisei is particularly memorable. It was a frosty, moonlit night, and before us stretched the boundless, scintillating robe of the Siberian snows. Vladimir Ilyich inspiringly told me of his plans and proposals on his return to Russia. The organization of a party newspaper, the transference abroad of its publication, and the formation of a party with the aid of this paper, which would thus be the scaffolding for the erection of the whole edifice of a revolutionary organization of the proletariat, lay at the centre of his argument. To be frank, at first it seemed to me that he overestimated the part which such a party newspaper could play, because for a long time during exile he himself had had of necessity to devote himself solely to writing.

The course of events demonstrated the profound correctness of the path indicated by Vladimir Ilyich.

III

Events showed that when Vladimir Ilyich on the completion of his Siberian exile went abroad and launched *Iskra* (*Spark*), the first all-Russian Marxist newspaper, it was a turning point in the destiny of our Party. It will be recalled that as a subhead *Iskra* bore the words: *The Spark Will Kindle a Flame.* We saw this flame actually kindled in the great October conflagration, lighting a red dawn over the whole enslaved

world. If you today glance over the pages of the old *Iskra*, you will be fully convinced of the immense significance of its passionate teachings in the awakening of the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat throughout Russia. You will see how, among the whole phalanx of brilliant writers assembled by Vladimir Ilyich under *Iskra*'s banner, his own central, directing figure stands out clearly, with his simple and clear thinking, his impassioned words, full of anger and audacity and ever rallying his readers to new battles against the enemies of the proletarian cause. The old *Iskra* will always remain an instructive example of how a party newspaper should be conducted so that it should be simultaneously a guide and rallying point, a warning light and a militant tocsin, loudly summoning up revolutionary sentiment and the will to action. Around it began to rally those forces which were later to demonstrate on an unprecedented scale the all-conquering might of Lenin's tactics and his "Marxism in action." It was around this banner that the first alignment of the "iron cohort of Bolsheviks" took place.

I will pass over the first Russian nuclei of the *Iskra* organization, which were the prototypes for the future committee-type organizations; I will pass over the association with the Social-Democratic newspaper *Yuzhny Rabochy* (*Southern Worker*), the activity of the first organizational committee for the convening of a Party Congress and the work with the Samara centre, and go on to recollections linked with the Kiev period of my revolutionary activity (1903-05).

You will recall the Second Congress in 1903 and the first split in the ranks of the newly-formed Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. By the decision of this Congress I came to be a member of the Central Committee (first convocation) and therefore was in the closest contact with the Geneva centre.

In Kiev, where the basic nucleus of the Central Committee was situated, it was at first extremely difficult for us.

The Central Committee was responsible for conducting the work on an all-Russian scale; it was necessary to unite the early scattered Committees into a single whole, to sustain the efforts of the comrades waging the extremely unequal struggle with *Zubatovshchina** and the refined police apparatus of a tsarism already sensing its impending downfall but still strong in its historical inertia.

The great liberatory aims, the small handful of professional revolutionaries, the more and more noticeable stirring of the elemental movement of the popular masses, inadequate means, the constant process of "making do" and the constant failures—these were the circumstances in which we first had to build a Party apparatus on an all-Russian scale. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance that the regular appearance of *Iskra* had for us in that struggle to lay the foundations of the Party. Even the very thought that, despite all our failures, the team of six headed by Vladimir Ilyich was working out of reach of the police, sustained us in the most difficult moments. Judge for yourself the painful impact produced by the news that the very first result of the 1903 Party Congress was a split among the *Iskra* editors, when Vladimir Ilyich, whose dominant and decisive role on the editorial board of the central newspaper had long been clear to us, found himself in complete isolation.

* *Zubatovshchina*—a provocative policy pursued by the tsarist government at the beginning of this century to counteract the revolutionary workers' movement. It was called after the gendarmerie Colonel Zubatov, who created pseudo-workers' organizations under police and gendarme supervision.—*Ed.*

Responsible work in Kiev under such circumstances was very difficult for me; obtaining a forged passport, I immediately crossed the frontier. In Geneva I found myself in a seething cauldron of émigré quarrels. Meeting my old friends, I didn't recognize them, such was the degree of mutual dislike they had attained. The bulk of the ant-heap's wrath was directed against Vladimir Ilyich. I remember particularly the sorrowful plaints of Plekhanov, assuring me that for the sake of the unity of the old editorial board of *Iskra*—"an Invincible Armada," in his view—it was worth while to make very much more than this or that concession in the interpretation of the paragraph on Party membership.

Naturally, in those feverish days I spent the most time with Vladimir Ilyich, and he stood out immediately as the most calm and restrained of them all. I saw clearly that he deliberately tried to reduce "propagandizing" me to the minimum, leaving it to me to make my own choice in the split which had taken place. Fate was at that time most unkind to me; for one who had still not broken with the day-to-day practicality of our Russian revolutionary situation of which I spoke earlier it had prepared an extremely thankless role as a buffer. I started to strain every effort to bring about a reconciliation between those who had until recently been friends.

Vladimir Ilyich, with all his amazing inner integrity of character, was, in fact, a man of rare modesty, utterly without self-interest. I remember that one of my disputes with Vladimir Ilyich went on until very late at night. Knowing the importance he attached to the needs of our practical revolutionary work in Russia, I sought to persuade him of the need for a reconciliation, describing the fatal effects of a split upon that work. "Finally, don't forget, Vladimir Ilyich," I said, "the situation which has arisen. In effect all, absolutely all are against you! Even among those few who voted with you, there are in my

view some who did so mainly because of personal loyalty to you. You are alone against everyone."

It will be recalled that a certain reconciliation between Lenin, Plekhanov and Martov* was reached during the Geneva talks. I attached special importance to the personal tie-up between them, and the personal issue was, it seemed, settled. But how dearly I had to pay for the overestimation of that personal issue and for the shortsightedness in political judgment.

After a short time I was once again in Kiev and assured my friends there that the danger of a split was past and that our old *Iskra* was as before "an Invincible Armada." Alas! A few weeks passed, and we in Kiev received a whole series of letters from abroad together with appropriate literature indicating the irreparable split between the two sides. The struggle again flared up all along the line, with the only difference that both sides now thoroughly and deservedly assailed me for my "conciliatory" attempts, while the future course of events vividly demonstrated that Vladimir Ilyich alone was farseeing in the historical sense. If genius consists in the foreseeing of events, in seeing them many, many years before the mass of ordinary people understand their essence, then this early discernment of the revolutionary fall from grace of the Mensheviks revealed with especial clarity the brilliant historical clairvoyance of Vladimir Ilyich.

Bolshevism and Menshevism represented two diametrically opposed conceptions of the objective nature of things. But this became absolutely clear only during the subsequent course of events, only to the extent that the barricades of the people's uprisings sprang up and extended in the plains of Russia.

* J. O. Martov—a Menshevik leader.—*Ed.*

IV

The events of 1905 found me still in Kiev, where I played an active part in the great railway strike, taking advantage of the fact that with the aid of a few personal contacts I had been able to get employment in the South-Western Railway Administration. During the latter part of the strike I was chairman of the strike committee, to the great dissatisfaction of the railway management, to whom it was distasteful to see a qualified engineer in such a role. Drawing our support from the great body of railway workers and staff, we conducted our attack in brisk style and were quickly masters of the situation not only on the railways, but in the city too. The authorities were at a loss, but it cannot be said that we clearly saw our way forward; we were seized with growing alarm, not knowing how to crown the chain of our endless meetings. The tsar's Manifesto of October 17, promising a constitution and "civil liberties," appeared at a time when confusion was beginning to appear among the railwaymen and the Kiev revolutionary organizations close to them. Then the overwhelming mass of hangers-on who were carried along by the great all-Russian strike movement became anxious to come to rest beside the nearest shore which would assure them the most rudimentary additions to such poor economic and political rights as they had previously enjoyed. You will easily understand how difficult it was in such circumstances to call for the abandonment of these constitutional illusions, and for effective preparations for the inevitable armed struggle with a cunning opponent.

The October events in Kiev closed with shots and a cavalry charge against a several-thousand-strong crowd assembled in the Kreshchatik (the main thoroughfare of the city) and around the City Duma. Then followed a great anti-Jewish pogrom and, a little later, the still

more bloody "pacification" of the sappers' mutiny. I evaded arrest only by going to St. Petersburg—to that same St. Petersburg where Vladimir Ilyich Lenin then was and from whence we were receiving eloquent warnings that above all it was necessary to keep our powder dry.

The transition from the Kiev of the pogroms to a St. Petersburg still drowning in "civil liberties" was extremely striking. In Kiev I was accustomed to keeping my revolver by me and to being always on guard against an attack by Black Hundreds*; it was not for nothing that the Black-Hundred newspaper *Kievlyanin* charged those of us leading the railwaymen's strike with high treason. But here on the streets of St. Petersburg, there was an abundance of the sharpest sort of condemnatory literature, and newspaper-boys boldly retailing the then numerous newspapers and humourous magazines, dancing from one foot to the other and singing about the Prime Minister: "Witte dances, Witte jumps, Witte sings his little song. . . ."

The pictures of the Kiev defeat still vivid in my memory, the arrest of my friends—all this did not encourage me to take an optimistic view of these delights of St. Petersburg. It is not given to all to soar over realities' defeats with eagle's wings. Stunned by the events in Kiev, I above all feared an overestimation of our own strength and opportunities. I remember that on this score I had many disputes with Vladimir Ilyich. But at the same time I could not but marvel at and admire the tremendous energy which he then showed in St. Petersburg. It was, as it were, his first "trial" emergence from the underground into the broad historical arena, but it had already become clear to all with eyes to see at what great stature

* Black Hundreds—members of extremely reactionary monarchist organizations appearing in Russia at the time of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905-07.—*Ed.*

this man could stand under conditions of broad, open activity. It seemed that the glow of peasant revolts, the first swallows of menacing military uprising, the waves of strikes stormily extending far and wide, found in him alone a focus which could with wisdom assess their results and, undeterred by any losses or fluctuations in the fortunes of the struggle, guide the ship of revolution into the harbour which would ensure the maximum revolutionary gains with the minimum of losses.

Still not recognized by all, still only half-perceived, Vladimir Ilyich was however for very many the acknowledged captain of the ship of the Russian proletarian revolution. "Make a day do the work of a year!"—that is the slogan which must be adhered to in a revolutionary period by those who fight for the gains of the revolution. And it was a slogan to which Vladimir Ilyich unswervingly adhered. Not only did he himself take every advantage by means of his barbed words, not resorting to any Aesopian phrases, of the widening opportunities to speak out in the press; he himself urged and organized all our Party writers so that they should not lose valuable minutes in the struggle for the extensive and genuinely revolutionary enlightenment of the popular masses. Now, thumbing through the numerous works of Vladimir Ilyich during the first Russian revolution, you will be impressed and amazed by the farsightedness of his opinions, the precision of his blows, the prophetic nature of his foresight and by the enormous labour with which he tore away each and every disguise in which the people's enemies like to array themselves when the people's will to revolutionary action is awakening.

I can remember one of Vladimir Ilyich's speeches at a huge meeting in the People's House of Countess Panina. At the rostrum appeared one after the other the faces of orators well known to St. Petersburg. The finest spokesmen of the Cadets and Trudoviki performed. Then

on that selfsame rostrum appeared an orator as yet unknown to the great audience. All that struck the eye was the lofty line of the brow and the penetrating gleam of the slightly squinting eyes. He spoke for only some ten minutes, but we saw clearly that this orator had completely mastered and thrown his spell upon the thousands and thousands of eyes which were fixed upon him in rapt attention.... Here indeed was a mighty tribune of the people. With iron logic he gave his listeners an analysis of the events which they were witnessing, and it was clear to all that no other analysis was possible, any more than it could be doubted that twice two are four. This being so, then with what indignation must history judge those who did not comprehend the clear meaning of these events and did not see the decisive part to be played in them by the people of the "lower depth"! But still more contempt must fall upon the heads of those who consciously sought to obscure the real meaning of events, striving to pervert the self-confidence of the labouring masses, to lull their will with fables of some haven allegedly already achieved. Who are these traitors and betrayers who reduced to nothing the enormous sacrifices which the proletariat had already made in its struggle not only for the liberation of itself but also for the cause of all those who toil? On examination it proves that under the cover of more or less eloquent words such a betrayal was perpetrated by all parties, including the Mensheviks. The Bolsheviks alone held to a straight course for the attainment of genuine revolutionary gains.

With every word of this orator one felt profound thought carried through to its logical conclusion, and passionate conviction that conquered more surely than any oratorical charms or elegant modulations of tone. He left the rostrum amid a storm of applause which grew into an ovation—joined, as we saw, even by those whom he had just exposed. Herein, surely, lies the strength of a tribune

of the people—that he is able to win the masses despite their varied level. Just such a tribune was our Vladimir Ilyich, and it was necessary to adopt many security measures in order that the name of V. I. Ulyanov-Lenin should receive as little publicity as possible in such striking appearances.

The December 1905 rising in Moscow was put down. St. Petersburg maintained a sullen silence. The ground beneath Vladimir Ilyich's feet became more and more treacherous. Savage reprisals against leading workers of the first Russian revolution took on a more and more open form. In the interests of the Party it was decided that Vladimir Ilyich should be sent abroad as soon as possible—but what labour it cost us to achieve it! Like the captain of a ship, he was the last to leave. We persuaded him with great difficulty to settle in Finland at least.

I well remember one talk I had with Vladimir Ilyich before he left. One evening he made his way to my flat after a difficult working day, but so lively, so full of vitality.... Of course we talked about the recent events. I pointed out that a diminution in the movement of the masses after a tremendous sweep gives an unhealthy basis for individual partisan exploits and that all this piecemeal terror and sundry new "expropriations" indicated a decline in the revolutionary upsurge. He, on the contrary, saw in it the excellent possibility for organizing resolute revolutionary teams of twos and threes—the guarantee of a new mounting wave of mass movements. In the final analysis Vladimir Ilyich proved wholly correct when he said that the sowing of 1905 was too real and done among such strata of soil that to call it fruitless would be the same as to say that the pulse of a great country, full of strength, had ceased to beat. If the events of 1905 had vividly shown that a few thousand professional revolutionaries could mobilize hundreds of thousands of proletarians and those closest to the proletariat,

then next time tens of thousands organized under the banner of the Party would lead tens of millions into the movement and victory would be sure.

The part which Vladimir Ilyich played in the period of stagnation after the defeat of the 1905 Revolution, and his great work at the height of the greatest revolution in the world—our October Revolution—are subjects so great and worth while that I do not wish to touch upon them merely in concluding these recollections of Vladimir Ilyich. But when you speak of him, it is difficult to break off your story.

He consumed all his strength in the service of the greatest revolution in the world, exhausting his brilliant brain with arduous thought. Not long before his last fatal sickness, when he had scarcely recovered from the preceding attack, he said to me with a perplexed smile: "Yes, it seems that I took too heavy a load upon myself...." He said it in a questioning tone. He still doubted whether his contribution—life itself—had been sufficient.

C. S. ZELIKSON-BOBROVSKAYA

UNFORGETTABLE MEETINGS

I

The first work of Lenin came into my hands at the end of 1895; it was an article "The Economic Nature of Narodism and Struve's Criticism of It" signed by "K. Tulin." This was published in a Marxist symposium "Data on Our Economic Development." The symposium, legal when it first appeared in 2,000 copies, was burned on the orders of the tsarist censorship.

In his report on the "pernicious nature" of the symposium to the Chief Censorship Committee on May 10, 1895, the censor Matveyev paid special attention to the article by "K. Tulin." In it, he said, "the state is depicted as the assistant and ally of capitalism, which oppresses and exploits the people's labour; in so doing the innocent desires of those who expect a solution of the problem of the people's needs and the satisfaction of social demands by the state are ridiculed as obvious stupidity."

Recalling the Ministry of the Interior's ban on the re-publication of the first two volumes of Marx's *Capital*, this zealous tsarist censor continues: ". . . but the present symposium not only disseminates the teachings set out in that work (Marx's *Capital.—C. Z.-B.*), but also tendentiously applies them to our society, rejecting in principle

any measure for the improvement of the economic condition of the people coming from the state.

"Therefore, finding the symposium entitled 'Data on Our Economic Development' to be of a harmful nature, tending to undermine the existing order and at the same time expressed not as an individual, personal opinion but rather in the form of a programme for the Russian followers of the teachings of Marx, I on the basis of Articles 95 and 149 of the Code of Censorship bring it to the attention of the Committee."

One of the few copies of the symposium which escaped the burning reached the illegal Marxist circles in Warsaw, in which I, then a young working girl in a craft workshop, participated.

As in many other cities of Russia, there was in Warsaw at that time great discussion between the Marxists and Narodniks about the fate of the approaching Russian revolution, to which each of us was prepared to dedicate his young life. The Narodniks quite often beat us Marxists in those discussions. They had a trump card in the articles of Mikhailovsky in the legal magazine *Russkoye Bogatstvo* (*Russian Wealth*). We Marxists were restricted to the illegal literature published by the "Emancipation of Labour" group which with great delay reached us irregularly from Switzerland.

That was why the legally published Marxist symposium, with "K. Tulin's" article as the main centre of attention, was such a great event for us. His exhaustive criticism of Narodism was our daily bread. It gave us a splendid weapon in our day-to-day struggle with our ideological opponents, who contemptuously labeled us "little Marxists," accusing us of evil schemes allegedly aimed at "the speediest possible boiling up of our own Russia in a factory cauldron," and so on.

A detail, to which it is now, after the passage of half a century, not shameful to confess, is revealing only that

part of Lenin's work which dealt with the Narodniks became imprinted on our minds. That part in which he, dealing with Struve's book, administered a sharp rebuff to the first attempts to distort Marxism in Russia, passed us by almost completely. So regrettable an occurrence indicates our theoretical naïveté at the time. The living Narodniks were there on the spot, we met them every day and fought with them, but a living legal Marxist had not yet entered our field of vision.

Of the author "Tulin" we were only able to find out that that was not his real name and that he lived and worked not abroad but in Russia. How much more fortunate than we in remote Warsaw, far from central Russia, were the comrades then in direct contact with Lenin.

I heard of Lenin, then personally unknown to me, for the second time in 1896, when in summer I left Warsaw for a short stay in my native town of Velizh, in the Vitebsk Province. This time, instead of the puzzling "Tulin," it was the still more puzzling "Starik," who, moreover, was certainly no "Starik" in years, but who was so called for reasons of security.

The famous strike of St. Petersburg weavers and spinners had just finished. Its scale and organization produced a tremendous impression upon workers throughout Russia. The start of an open mass workers' movement in the capital also roused us, the workers in illegal Marxist circles in other cities, with especial force. Till then, our activity had not gone beyond propaganda among small groups of workers, conspiratorial meetings with individual workers, and so on.

Our impressions of the events in St. Petersburg were later well expressed by Lenin's sister, the late A. I. Elizarova, in her recollections of her brother. "It was as though a window was opened into the stifling and stuffy cell of the Russian autocracy; we all thirstily drank in

the fresh air, experiencing an unprecedented boldness and vigour."

How could one not feel a new surge of courage, when events were opening up such glittering prospects, when the opportunity for the realization of our long-cherished dream, the long-awaited meeting with the working masses, was coming so near?

To Velizh came my friend Yelena, a pupil of the St. Petersburg feldshers' school. We sat in her family's squalid hut and had a heart-to-heart talk—or, rather, Yelena, with increasing excitement, would talk and I would listen, striving not to miss a single word of her enthralling tale. Her pockets were stuffed with illegal literature which she had brought from St. Petersburg, duplicated appeals to the striking weavers and spinners. Among these short leaflets was one more lengthy pamphlet headed: *To the Working Men and Women of the Thornton Mill.*

Yelena described how this leaflet had been put out in autumn 1895, when the general strike of weavers and spinners was only in its preparatory stages, and how it was written by a man who quickly found himself in prison, where he still remained. He was called "Starik." While in prison he was guiding the day-to-day revolutionary activity of the St. Petersburg Social-Democrats; his links with them had not been broken even after his arrest. She did not know his real name, but even if she did, she would not have told, strictly observing the requirements of security.

The "note-books," in which "Starik" gave the Narodniks such a drubbing that they lay very low, enjoyed great popularity among the Social-Democrats of St. Petersburg. She had wanted very much to bring these "note-books" but hadn't been able to. They were few and were seized upon to be read, their conviction producing a deep impression.

That was how in 1896 I became acquainted with a second work of Lenin—*To the Working Men and Women of the Thornton Mill*—and also learnt of the existence of his "note-books" (*What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats?*). But I was still unable to read this remarkable book.

Two years later, in 1898, I went for a brief period to Switzerland and came into close contact with the "Emancipation of Labour" group. Living in the house of Axelrod, one of its founders, I more than once heard his delighted comments about the author of the newly-published pamphlet, *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats*, to which he had written a preface, and which I immediately read.

I was overcome with curiosity and very much wanted to find out who had written such a splendid book. But the strictest security rules were observed there too, although it was Switzerland, not Russia. The only thing that I was able to get from Axelrod was that the book was written in exile and that its author was a fervent supporter of the "Emancipation of Labour" group.

The atmosphere among the Russian Social-Democrats abroad organized in the "Union" was extremely tense and a split was maturing. Under the influence of the revisionist articles of Eduard Bernstein, appearing in the theoretical journal of the German Social-Democrats, *Neue Zeit,* the activity of the Russian Economists was increasing greatly. The most inveterate of these were Prokopovich and Kuskova, later to be the authors of the notorious *Credo,* against whose whole conception Lenin declared war. Lenin in 1899 described Prokopovich as a zealous partisan of Bernstein. "In his well-known *Die Voraussetzungen, etc.*," he wrote, "Bernstein recommended . . . Prokopovich as his Russian supporter, in so doing however making a proviso to the effect that Prokopovich was more Bernsteinian than Bernstein himself."

II

In 1899, fulfilling an assignment of the Kharkov Party Committee, I with many precautions delivered several score copies of *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats* from Vilno to Kharkov in a basket with other illegal literature.

During the period of dispersion and instability among Russian Social-Democrats, Lenin's *Tasks*, so precisely and clearly pointing the way for practical activity, played a tremendous role in the localities.

Kharkov at that time was no happy exception. Despite the comparatively extensive scale of the work, there was a great deal of confusion. Lenin mentioned this in his well-known foreword to the pamphlet *May Days in Kharkov*. Criticizing the shortcomings of the Kharkov Party organization which revealed themselves on May Day, 1900, the first public demonstration by the Kharkov workers, Lenin wrote:

"The mass of the workers were already aroused and ready to fall in behind the socialist leaders, but the 'General Staff' (the Party organization—*C. Z.-B.*) had still not succeeded in organizing a hard core which would correctly allocate the existing forces of the class-conscious workers and ensure a so conspiratorial (secret) handling of affairs that the plans of action prepared beforehand should remain unknown not only to the authorities, but also to everybody outside the organization."

All we active Party workers, even if we were not fully conscious of it, at least sensed this absence of a "hard core" correctly allocating the existing forces. This was felt not only in our organization—the "core" was then lacking throughout the Party.

That was why our hearts beat so joyfully when in the summer of 1900 we heard a rapporteur from Poltava set-

ting out the plan for the creation abroad of a central guiding journal for the Party.

Telling us in detail of the plan for the future Leninist *Iskra*, the rapporteur, without giving names, informed us that this plan had been worked out in exile and that its initiator had completed his term of exile and already gone abroad, where he would work to carry it to fruition, doing everything in complete agreement with the "Emancipation of Labour" group, with which there were long-standing ties.

Not all who were present at the conference welcomed the rapporteur's tidings. Several Economists, recently arrived from St. Petersburg, adherents of *Rabochaya Mysl* (*Workers' Thought*), voiced the fear that the new paper, being under the wing of the "Emancipation of Labour" group, would make a call only for political struggle, ignoring the economic fight.

Nor did the *Yuzhny Rabochy* supporters, infected with local "patriotism," view the project with any great enthusiasm, fearing that the future Party paper would dim the glories of their own.

However, in general, objections were few, and together with the rapporteur we agreed on co-operation with the new paper both with articles and correspondence and whatever material aid was possible.

After his departure we impatiently awaited the first issue of the promising new paper. But many of us had to wait a long time: we were soon all arrested. I personally, for example, was able to see the first issues of *Iskra* only almost 18 months after their appearance, at the conclusion of preliminary detention. *Iskra* could not at that time penetrate to a solitary confinement cell in the secret wing of the Kharkov Provincial Prison.

I did not have Lenin's *Iskra* with me in my cell, but I did have Vladimir Ilyich's major work *The Development*

of Capitalism in Russia, recently legally published by him under the name of Ilyin.

"The socialist intelligentsia," wrote Lenin as early as 1894, "can expect to perform fruitful work only when it abandons its illusions and begins to seek support in the actual, and not the desired development of Russia, in the actual, and not the possible social-economic relations."

I shall never forget the immense inner satisfaction that I derived from a careful study of Lenin's fundamental work. Somewhat later, when I met Lenin personally, I recalled that satisfaction. At first he tried to pass it off with a joke: "Poor, poor you, wading through all my innumerable dull figures in solitude, how I pity you," and so on. But then he started to enquire seriously about just how I had found my way through his tables, whether they were understandable and how other comrades read the book. It was clear that he himself attached considerable importance to a reading of this book by Party workers, and he joked only because of his ever-present modesty.

Although we prisoners in the solitary confinement cells of the tsarist prison could not read the first numbers of Lenin's *Iskra*, news of an event so important for the Party as the appearance of this newspaper in Russia reached us even behind the prison bars. In autumn 1901, on my release from prison and exile to my home town "prior to appearance in court," my first thought was to obtain and read at least one copy of this remarkable paper. An opportunity presented itself on the way home, which lay through Vitebsk.

The Vitebsk Social-Democrats had No. 4 of *Iskra*, of which the editorial "Where To Begin?" was widely discussed in all the illegal city circles.

"The question 'What is to be done?' " Lenin wrote, "has recently become especially acute for the Russian Social-Democrats. It is not, as it was at the end of the 80's and

beginning of the 90's, a question of the choice of a road, but of what practical steps we must take and how exactly they should be taken along the road we have already chosen. The question is one of a system and plan for practical activity. It must be confessed that this question of the nature and methods of struggle, fundamental for a practical party, remains as yet unsolved for us, and still arouses serious disagreements revealing a deplorable instability and looseness of thought."

Who was this who so sharply characterized that state of affairs in our local Party organizations, with their "deplorable instability and looseness of thought"? Who was the author of this article which opened up such wide horizons, proposing an elaborate plan "for the creation of a rostrum for the nation-wide exposure of the tsarist government"? This newspaper-rostrum was not to limit itself to the dissemination of ideas, to political education and the winning of political allies; it was also to be an organizational centre for the whole Party. The way was opened for the participation of rank-and-file Party workers in this great work.

Lenin's article "Where To Begin?" was an unforgettable signpost pointing out my future road. It was this which prompted me to immediately go underground in order later to go to Switzerland to get in touch with *Iskra* and, if the comrades there found me suitable, to become one of those "regularly fulfilling the detailed functions of all-Russian work," to become one of the agents for *Iskra*.

III

Several months were necessary for the correspondence and financial arrangements for the journey, to arrange the illegal crossing of the frontier, and so on. Not till summer 1902 did I reach Zurich.

When for old acquaintance's sake I called upon Axelrod, I immediately saw that in this always hospitable home some sombre mood incomprehensible to me now ruled. To my delight at the article in *Iskra* No. 4 which had decided my fate, and to my still greater delight at Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* which appeared at that time Axelrod responded either with some unimportant remark or a morose silence. When Plekhanov came from Geneva, the three of them—Axelrod, Plekhanov and Zasulich—talked for a long time behind closed doors.

We could not understand why the editors of *Iskra,* its chief workers, moved from Munich to London, whence came some "unpleasant" letters to Axelrod. London seemed remote and strange.

In Zurich a small *Iskra* distribution centre remained in the cellar of Axelrod's house. We sent bundles of the latest issues of *Iskra* to all European cities where among the then numerous Russian students "*Iskra* Aid Groups" were formed.

Working day in and day out in this centre with Axelrod's daughter, I was able eventually to find out from her that a struggle was under way within *Iskra* concerning the drafting of a programme for the forthcoming Party Congress, that "Petrov," who made no concession "even" to Plekhanov, was responsible for the exacerbation of this struggle, that Petrov had a "difficult nature" and that however hard Axelrod and Zasulich tried to reconcile Plekhanov and Petrov, they had so far had no success.

But, of course, the exacerbation of relations between Lenin and Plekhanov was in no way caused by Petrov's (Lenin's) "difficult nature," but by a profoundly principled struggle between them on basic questions of the programme of a proletarian party.

At first we knew nothing of the essence of this bitter struggle. Only a small circle of the senior comrades were

in touch with events. It began to be alarming. We feared that the slightest rift in *Iskra* would play into the hands of the enemies of the Party and of every sort of revisionist faction. As time went by some sort of information about the ideological differences between Plekhanov and Lenin, whose prestige had grown extraordinary since the appearance of his *What Is To Be Done?*, filtered down even to us, the novice Party workers. London no longer seemed strange and remote. I wanted to go there, to the author of *What Is To Be Done?*, to hear from his own lips what there would be for us to do on our return to Russia and, above all, the conviction emerged that only with his aid would it be possible to return quickly.

On more than one occasion I spoke to Axelrod of our desire to get to London, but he obstinately rejected any such suggestion, declaring that very shortly the most important of the *Iskra* workers, including the author of *What Is To Be Done?*, would have to come to Zurich and we would all see them.

Only a few of the more important workers who had still for various reasons to remain outside Russia were sent to London. It was proposed that we, a small group of workers who had so far shown ourselves to be not bad local organizers, should immediately start out for Russia, and each of us received a special assignment from *Iskra*. It was proposed that I should go to the northern textile region—Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Yaroslavl, Kostroma and Shuya—where the first task was to restore *Iskra*'s severed links with the Northern Union of the R.S.D.L.P.* (having the code name "Semyon Semyonovich"), broken up by the gendarmerie a little while before.

On the way I had to stop in St. Petersburg to print an all-Russian leaflet in the secret print-shop from copy sent

* Northern Union of the R.S.D.L.P. united the Social-Democratic organizations of the Vladimir, Kostroma, Yaroslavl and Tver Provinces of Russia.—*Ed.*

to Zurich by the *Iskra* editors. Whether the author of this leaflet was Lenin or not I was not able to establish then or since. I also received the task of calling at Tver (Kalinin) to receive a basket containing issues of *Iskra* and several copies of *What Is To Be Done?* which was held there, in order to distribute them together with the leaflets printed in St. Petersburg in the mills and factories in the district "entrusted" to me. In addition I was to supply *Iskra* regularly with correspondence, articles and every kind of information.

That was how I became an agent for Lenin's *Iskra.*

IV

After several months of intense work followed the then inevitable result for us underground workers—fresh arrest. But on this occasion it didn't take much time. By summer 1903, choosing Tver as my place of temporary residence "prior to appearance before the court," I was again able to take part in active Party work.

The Tver organization was an *Iskra* group, maintaining permanent contact with the centre abroad. It was guided in all its activity by the organizational principles set out by Lenin in his *What Is To Be Done?* A special feature of its work at that time was its well-established activity in the countryside.

"To bring political knowledge to the *workers* the Social-Democrats must *go among all classes of the population,* must despatch units of their army *in all directions,*" taught Lenin. In accordance with this, the Tver comrades made skilful use of the fact that the personnel of even such a large local undertaking as the Morozov Mill was in the main made up of peasants who still retained their links with the countryside. Lenin's pamphlet *To the Village Poor* which we received played a truly exceptional

role in winning over the peasantry in our area to the Social-Democrats and in extending and strengthening our influence in the countryside.

The Second Congress of our Party took place abroad at this time. The Tver organization elected a firm *Iskra* supporter, Alexander Gusev, as its delegate. It later transpired that he did not reach his destination. While crossing the frontier illegally he fell seriously ill and died in Geneva a few days after his arrival. *Iskra* No. 50 published a moving obituary of our comrade who died at his post.

Not at first knowing of the death of our delegate or of the events at the Congress we daily awaited tidings from abroad with growing impatience; the mood of all was extremely optimistic, based upon the profoundest certainty that *Iskra* would emerge from the Congress completely victorious.

But then, like a bolt from the blue, came rumours that *Iskra* itself had been split at the Congress. We did not want to believe this. I felt I had to go abroad to study the documentary material which would give a clear picture.

It was no easy matter to get away from local work and cross the frontier. But events soon helped me to carry out such a trip. With the approach of autumn, secluded places in the woods had already become inadequate "quarters" for our Party meetings. We had to meet in the city in the homes of sympathetic intellectulas or workers. To evade shadowing by the tsarist secret police became more and more difficult. The shadowing increased and one autumn night our organization was smashed. The arrests were on a mass scale, and many sympathizers, not to speak of active workers, were seized.

But the police only carried out searches at the homes of a few of us who had comparatively recently come out of preliminary detention and who were in Tver pending trial under open police surveillance. The gendarmerie

clearly counted upon the destroyed Party organization being restored by those under supervision. We immediately saw through this manoeuvre, of course; we well understood that here new people were needed, people not known to the local defenders of the tsarist regime. It would be better for us to take advantage of the auspicious moment to go somewhere else where we were not known.

However, before setting out for a new city, I wanted to know exactly what was going on throughout the Party, I wanted to go abroad, even if only for a very short time, and this I was able to do. In the depths of autumn 1903 I arrived in Geneva.

V

There I found the struggle between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks at its height. The sessions of the Congress of the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad were in progress.

During those feverish days the Mensheviks headed by Martov also carried on vigorous activity for "the snaring of souls" outside the Congress, seeking to draw into the Menshevik camp those of us who, having only just arrived, had not been at the Congress of the League. I was the object of special attention both from Axelrod, who had known me for a number of years, and from Martov, who remembered me from a meeting in Kharkov in 1900.

With such great bitterness did the Menshevik leaders assure me that Lenin was a "usurper," a "mailed fist" who had introduced a "state of siege" into the Party, and so on and so forth, that after a few such conversations I was summoned to the office of the pension in which I was staying. There I was with great courtesy warned that "If such loud, heated voices are heard coming from

your room until late at night in the future, we shall have to ask you to leave."

In the days following I studied the material dealing with the split. One document, entitled "An Account of the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.", written by Lenin, was the object of my special attention. "We proved," it said in part, "that it is necessary to *narrow down* the understanding of the term 'Party member' in order to separate the workers from the chatterers and to put an end to organizational chaos."

For the majority of rank-and-file Party workers, like myself, who had not been able to go into all the disputed issues, the difference between Lenin and Martov on the question of the formulation of the first point of the Party Rules—who should be considered a member of the Party—was fundamental. We were then suffering too much from difficulties with various sympathizers from among the bourgeois intellectuals, who were not amenable to Party discipline, timid, valuing their legality and peace of mind, for it to be considered useful for the Party to legitimize them as members through its Rules.

From a personal experience during the last days before my departure from Tver I could see how unreliable were our bourgeois democrat hangers-on, adhering in words to our programme, aiding our organizations, but not taking an active part in their work. When our Party had to work underground, when we were daily and hourly in danger of disaster, it was necessary for the preservation of continuity to have at least one member of the Committee in reserve who for security reasons would for the time being stand a little outside the day-to-day active work. In case of arrest this reserve would help the new workers to re-establish what had been destroyed by the gendarmerie and was himself required to take part in the work if there were not enough people.

We in Tver had one such reserve Committee member,

a Zemstvo doctor by profession. After the collapse of our organization, when I, together with the other people under police surveillance, had only undergone a search, and after a series of precautions made my way in the morning to the Zemstvo hospital to our reserve doctor, I heard to my surprise that he by no means intended to come out of reserve and had no intention of compromising himself by active Party work. That was not for him. Let new people come and do the work. Yes, indeed, how great was the need in the localities to separate the workers from the chatterers!

Thus, a simple acquaintance with Lenin's formulation of the first point of the Party Rules was sufficient reason for me to tell Axelrod that I intended to go to the meeting of Bolsheviks where I could see the author of this formulation.

VI

For seven years—from 1895 to 1902—in Warsaw, Velizh, Zurich and Kharkov, and under various names—Tulin, "Starik," Ilyin and the unknown *Iskra* organizer Petrov—the features of the teacher had flashed before me. Only in summer 1902, when I had read *What Is To Be Done?*, a book serving us as such a remarkable guide to action, did these names become concentrated in one—Lenin.

That was why, before I saw Lenin, I imagined him to be just as he in fact was when I met him—standing immeasurably higher than us all but at the same time an equal, simple comrade, who brought out all that was best in you yourself as a revolutionary.

In one of the squares in the centre of Geneva there was—and perhaps still is—the Landolt Café. There, in two opposite and fairly spacious back rooms, the Bol-

sheviks and the Mensheviks would meet almost every night.

To the Bolsheviks' room came Lenin accompanied by his wife Nadezhda Konstantinovna and a group of active Bolshevik Party workers, who had broken out of jail and escaped from exile and who were abroad only for a short time to link up with the Party centre.

To the room opposite came Martov, invariably accompanied by Dan and his fairly large Menshevik following, made up to a great extent of émigrés who had firmly settled abroad and of bourgeois intellectuals calling themselves revolutionaries. Later on, to the great disappointment of Lenin and ourselves, his supporters, Plekhanov also began to go to the Mensheviks after his break with Lenin.

Arriving at the Landolt and going with a group of comrades to the "Bolshevik room" I found there—from the numerical point of view—a more than modest audience. Vladimir Ilyich appeared, followed by Nadezhda Konstantinovna, greeting everyone and exchanging jocular remarks with the comrades in passing.

He briskly mounted the improvised platform and launched into a survey of the thorny questions of the unhappy situation inside the Party after the League's Congress and the betrayal of Plekhanov. Martov and his supporters slandered the Party, disseminated every kind of fable about the Party Congress majority, discrediting the Bolshevik members of the Central Committee elected by the Congress, cut the ties which Lenin, as the Central Committee's representative abroad, maintained with Russia, intercepted money despatched from Russia for the sending of workers there, and held up literature. Plekhanov, who on the evening the League's Congress concluded (October 31, 1903) told Lenin that he "could not shoot at his own side," now worked hand in glove with the Mensheviks. The intellectual individualism, the

vacillation, which had appeared at the Second Congress during the discussion on the first point of the Party Rules, had resulted in the chaos and collapse of which we were now the witnesses.

The urgent task was to send the largest possible number of comrades, staunch Bolsheviks, to Russia, who, occupying places in the Committees, would correctly inform the local Party organizations of the situation within the Party. But the absence of sufficient means for the sending of an adequate number of comrades was an obstacle. It was necessary to husband our resources strictly.

Of course, after the lapse of more than 50 years, I can describe the first speech I heard by Lenin only in the most general terms.

There was nothing involved about what Lenin said, everything was simple and comprehensible to any active Party worker. But everything was said in such a way that it went right to the heart, prompting the desire to set out for Russia immediately, that very day, even on foot, to make every effort to prove Lenin's correctness to the local Party organizations and to warn the Committees of the dangers threatening the Party if they turned aside from the road he indicated.

After his report Lenin came up to the group of comrades who presented me, the novice, to him. Clasping my hand warmly, Vladimir Ilyich, screwing up his eyes, asked whether I wasn't afraid to come here to the "dreadful" Bolsheviks, where there were "usurpers," "mailed fists" and the "terrible" Lenin, who was introducing a "state of siege" into the Party.

When the gathering started to break up, Vladimir Ilyich and Nadezhda Konstantinovna very warmly and cordially invited me to visit them informally, an invitation which I did not of course hesitate to take advantage of.

VII

Vladimir Ilyich at that time lived on the outskirts of Geneva with Nadezhda Konstantinovna and her mother Elizaveta Vasilyevna Krupskaya, who was never separated from her daughter, invariably following her both into exile and abroad. In the suburb of Chasseron "the Ilyichs," as we called Vladimir Ilyich and Nadezhda Konstantinovna, occupied a small cottage. They lived in the upstairs, which was reached by a wooden staircase. Downstairs was a large kitchen with a stove on which a large enamelled kettle was permanently boiling in case a visitor should come. In a small room next to it was Elizaveta Vasilyevna, perpetually worried about her modest household. Her very first words were good-natured grumbles: "They pore over books and notebooks up there; Vladimir Ilyich torments himself with work and Nadya gets tired out—you can't get them down to eat."

It was here in the kitchen that on other occasions when several comrades came at once Vladimir Ilyich would receive guests, because the "apartments" upstairs were too cramped.

The furniture in two rooms upstairs consisted of simple tables, buried under magazines, manuscripts and newspaper cuttings. Along the walls were crudely knocked together shelves with books. In each room was a small bed, covered with a plaid rug, and a couple of chairs.

In the centre of Vladimir Ilyich's table there was a Russian abacus, with the aid of which he probably reckoned up his "one-horse" and "one-quarter of a horse" peasant households.

On Nadezhda Konstantinovna's table were her "instruments of production": a bottle of invisible ink and the "keys" with the aid of which she would write her

code messages between the lines of some "congratulations on the Saint's Day." Day and night Nadezhda Konstantinovna sat there decoding information received from Russia about the state of affairs in the localities and coding Lenin's messages to the Committees and individual Party workers telling of the situation in the Party centres abroad.

When I arrived both Vladimir Ilyich and Nadezhda Konstantinovna were sitting at their tables working; I was a hindrance, but I was nevertheless received very hospitably.

It was the first time I had seen Lenin at home, dressed student style in a dark-blue Russian shirt, an attire which was somehow especially in keeping with his well-set, harmonious "Russian" face.

Vladimir Ilyich first started to ask about my experience in prison and about the difficulties of underground work. I told him my impressions of the Kharkov Prison, telling in so doing how I had read *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* in my cell; then it was that Vladimir Ilyich jokingly called me "poor, poor you" for having had to work through his "boring" tables.

Vladimir Ilyich questioned me in great detail about the state of affairs in the Tver organization from which I had come, showing special interest in our work in the countryside, in the organizational details and the formation of peasant committees in the villages. He did not hide his satisfaction when I told of the importance of his pamphlet *To the Village Poor* for us.

Vladimir Ilyich chuckled merrily about one incident that befell one of our propagandists sent into a village. He was a qualified propagandist, but nonetheless he returned with a "secret" sealed letter containing a request from the Peasant Committee that he should not be sent again. The reason was: "...he is a gentleman, spending the night in a peasant's hut, but when washing

in the morning, taking a brush out of his pocket and beginning to clean his teeth."

This vexatious affair with the toothbrush prompted Vladimir Ilyich to speak of the importance, in the conditions of illegality under which our Party then laboured, to foresee every little thing, to be always on the watch, and to know thoroughly the situation in which one had to operate.

To be vigilant and cunning in the battle with the tsarist police was considered by Lenin to be an all-important feature of a revolutionary. I never forgot these instructions from Vladimir Ilyich during the future years of illegal Party work. It helped prolong the periods of work between one arrest and the next.

Lenin's attention to our local Party work, his interest in the difficulties, joys and griefs of each worker was very moving, and the respect with which he listened to your every remark, even the most timid, gave new courage.

During this, my very first visit to the home of Lenin, I very much wanted to hear from him of the further course of the inner-Party struggle. But Vladimir Ilyich, being in a happy mood, wishing clearly to rest a while from the questions which so agitated him, on this occasion dismissed it with jokes. He was particularly witty at dinner when we were all invited downstairs by Elizaveta Vasilyevna.

"Now," said Vladimir Ilyich humourously, "our Elizaveta Vasilyevna considers that the division which has arisen within our Party can be easily removed, that Julius Osipovich (Martov) must be reconciled with Vladimir Ilyich and that Vera Ivanovna (Zasulich), whom she intends to visit for a chat on this score, can do it."

At first it seemed to me that Ilyich had thought up this "plan for a way out of the situation" as a joke, but

from what followed it was clear that the naïve old mother had indeed planned to go on such an errand to Zasulich in the absolute belief that she could in that way succeed in restoring peace in the Party, disturbed as a result of the "fancies of Vladimir Ilyich and Julius Osipovich," as she put it. But the main thing was that then "Nadya would stop worrying herself about this business."

Making fun of Elizaveta Vasilyevna, Vladimir Ilyich for himself added:

"Julius (Martov) and I now walk on different sides of the Geneva streets. We see each other from afar and each of us crosses to the other side of the street; as for Plekhanov, I write to him. I sign myself not 'predanny Vam'—yours truly—but 'predanny Vamy'—betrayed by you."

Despite this jocular tone, these words echoed a great bitterness.

VIII

We took up much of Lenin's time, not only when he spoke to us in the evenings in the Landolt, but when, singly or in groups, we descended upon him at home. Even now I blush to recall how unceremoniously we behaved.

I well remember one evening when, listening to Lenin until late at night, I was stranded at his cottage, far from where I lived. I had missed the last tram and it was late and rather frightening to go on foot through the deserted streets. Vladimir Ilyich offered to accompany me, in order also to get a bit of fresh air.

Taking advantage of this happy opportunity for a heart-to-heart talk with Ilyich, I began to ask him some

ethical questions linked with my life as a professional revolutionary, which were then particularly troubling me. The point was that, in fulfilling the duties of *Iskra* agent, I frequently felt myself not sufficiently qualified for the post. The local Party organizations always respected those who came from the centre, and this worried me very much. It seemed to me that only specially gifted comrades, with a broad political horizon, oratorical talent and profound theoretical knowledge, had the right to be professionals. Professional revolutionaries from among the workers, it seemed to me, must have some special proletarian superinstinct to make up for their insufficient theoretical knowledge.

Having none of the qualities listed, I was tormented by the awareness that I was taking the high title of professional revolutionary in vain. I decided there and then to tell Vladimir Ilyich of the thoughts that were worrying me and to ask his advice. Vladimir Ilyich listened very attentively, as he always did, and was then himself carried away, beginning to talk of how he viewed the structure of our Party and its role in the unfolding revolutionary events.

Of the question of the right to call oneself a professional revolutionary which I had touched upon, Vladimir Ilyich said that this right belonged to those who were above all unreservedly devoted to the Party and the working class. This right should be enjoyed by people whose personal life merged with that of the Party. The revolutionary organization should not be restricted to a narrow circle of leaders; permanent, untiring workers who were directly linked with the masses, who would help build the edifice of the Party brick by brick, were necessary.

Of course, I was listening breathlessly and did not notice that we had reached the house where I lived. It was absolutely impossible to break off the conversation

at that point. I stopped helplessly and wanted to suggest to Ilyich that he come into my apartment, but everyone was already asleep there. Ilyich thought for a moment, then resolutely turned about, and we went back, continuing our interrupted conversation.

When in this way we again reached his cottage, Vladimir Ilyich laughed and began to make jokes, saying that all the same we should put an end to this endless seeing-off. But as he himself "was to blame" for being carried away by his own reasoning, he would once again accompany me home, but this time for the last time.

On parting, Vladimir Ilyich said to me:

"A little more *confidence* in your own strength! A little more confidence is what is wanted!"

How often in the most difficult, complex moments of Party work did I draw support from those words of Ilyich: "A little more *confidence* in your own strength."

It was characteristic that Vladimir Ilyich himself did not object to our "plundering" of his time and that we, the "plunderers," felt no twinges of conscience. My friend Makar, for example, a pattern-maker who had worked many years in the Putilov Plant in St. Petersburg and who was temporarily in Geneva with us, came to me almost every day and insisted that we go and have a chat with Ilyich. To my objections that it was inconvenient to bother Ilyich so often, Makar invariably replied:

"It's nothing. We need Ilyich, but he also needs us; we bring a breath of Russia."

Makar's constant gravitation towards Lenin was an expression of his profound respect for Ilyich. I recollect how once this great sturdy fellow burst in upon me with shining face and with completely childlike delight exclaimed:

"Ilyich's eyes, his eyes! How they shone yesterday!"

It appeared that I had missed a lot by not going to see Ilyich yesterday, when he had assailed the supporters of Martov with *special* vigour. Lenin at that time already prepared his remarkable *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back.* It may be that on that evening Makar had been fortunate to hear from Ilyich's own lips those words, so full of sarcasm, assailing the Mensheviks.

Vladimir Ilyich himself listened particularly attentively to Makar and talked to him at great length. Never did Lenin cease to show that in teaching the workers, it was necessary to learn from them.

Vladimir Ilyich spent New Year's Eve, 1904, with us. We saw the opera *Carmen* in a rather poor production, drank beer in the Landolt and strolled through the streets of Geneva, which were crowded that night. During the encounters with the Mensheviks which were inevitable during such walks we demonstratively turned away. We jestingly remarked that the Martov supporters turned away from us too. Our joyful, enthusiastic mood did not forsake us that New Year's Eve. In addition to everything else, we were still young; Vladimir Ilyich too was young, fond of a joke and a laugh.

IX

The new year was one of rapid growth for the revolutionary wave in Russia. It was, therefore, all the more urgent that the Party be rescued from the blind alley into which it had been led by the wrecking policy of the Mensheviks.

In his meetings with us Vladimir Ilyich began to allocate more and more attention to the practical preparation for a Congress in the localities, in Russia, whither, despite the scarcity of resources (the Menshe-

viks had seized the Party funds), we had been able to send a few people.

With the aim of establishing in Moscow a Northern Bureau of the Central Committee consisting of staunch Bolsheviks, Vladimir Ilyich had first of all sent there our general favourite Nikolai Bauman*—an escapee from the Kiev Prison and the chief organizer of that audacious break-out by 10 *Iskra* people famous in our Party's history.

A whole district of Moscow, in the streets of which this prominent Bolshevik fell fighting for the cause of the proletarian revolution in October 1905, is named after Nikolai Bauman. His blood cemented the ties of the working class and the working people of Moscow with the Moscow Bolshevik organization, which led them through many trials to another October—the victorious October 1917.

As a second member of the Northern Bureau went another faithful supporter of Lenin—the Central Committee member, now dead, Comrade Lengnik (Party pseudonyms Kurtz, Kol, and others).

By the spring 1904 a number of Bolsheviks had been sent to work in Russia by Lenin, among them Vladimir Bobrovsky, who had escaped with Bauman from the Kiev Prison and who was sent to the Caucasus at the disposal of the Union Committee.

The Caucasus Union Committee under the leadership of J. V. Stalin, who escaped from Siberian exile in January 1904, was then waging a bitter struggle for the Bolshevization of the local Party organizations, and preparing intensively for the Third Party Congress. It was proposed that I also should accompany

* N. E. Bauman (1873-1905)—an outstanding leader of the R.S.D.L.P., leader of the Moscow Bolshevik organization.—*Ed.*

the next group of comrades to be sent to Russia. But our departure was delayed by lack of resources, and also by the fact that owing to a sudden wave of arrests in Russia Lenin did not have sufficiently verified addresses where we could present ourselves on arrival.

I was temporarily sent to Berlin, where for several months before my departure for Russia my flat served as a forwarding centre in our organization for the illegal shipment of people and literature across the frontier. In the beginning of March 1904, I left Vladimir Ilyich during the most difficult days of his struggle for the Party.

Lenin saw better than anyone else that in the impending revolutionary events of militant 1905 the proletariat must advance as an independent serried column, with its own special slogans, not as the blind tool of the bourgeois revolution, but as its most conscious and most resolute participant and driving force.

Of Lenin, Stalin said: "... Never was the genius of Lenin's insight displayed so fully and distinctly as in a time of revolutionary outbreaks. In times of revolution he literally blossomed forth, became a seer, divined the movement of classes and the probable zigzags of the revolution, seeing them as if they lay in the palm of his hand."

Then too, as if in the palm of his hand, Vladimir Ilyich saw the urgent need for the speediest concentration of the Bolshevik forces—the need for the formation of a party of a new type, under whose guidance the proletariat could really appear as the driving force of the revolution. That was why Lenin brushed aside every obstacle which both the Mensheviks and conciliators from among the Central Committee majority constantly put in his way, and acted over the heads of these opportunists.

Relying upon a number of Bolshevik Committees in Russia, upon conferences convened by these Committees, and also upon a group of Bolshevik writers who came abroad to give him assistance, Lenin in 1904 established a firm Bolshevik centre—the newspaper *Vperyod* (No. 1 came out on January 4, 1905) and the Organization Committee for the convening of the Third Congress, which worked out the Bolsheviks' tactics for the developing bourgeois-democratic revolution and united the most conscious strata of the proletariat around their slogans.

V. A. KARPINSKY

LENIN THE EDITOR

I

To cast one's thoughts back over half a century, even in pursuit of one's own recollections, is very difficult. It is still more difficult to draw you, dear reader, along after me.

From amongst the whole host of images, impressions, events and facts which appear before me, I shall take those which have a common theme—Vladimir Ilyich's work as an editor.

I met Vladimir Ilyich in autumn 1904. It was in the Geneva suburb where the Bolsheviks usually met. Of course we did not have our own conference hall. We simply hired a room in a café for the evening.

I went in, my eyes searching for Lenin from the descriptions given by the comrades.... There he was, sitting in a corner, the electric light shining on his great forehead; smiling, he watched the gathering from under his hand shading his eyes, tapping the table with his pencil. That is the picture fixed for ever in my heart. Would that I were an artist, that I might straight away have drawn him!

The comrades went up to Vladimir Ilyich, greeted him informally and chatted. Soon he began his report—or

"paper," as we then called it. I don't remember the subject. But the impression was indelible.

"Here is a real *leader* of the Party, and at the same time *such a simple comrade*, to whom you can go and say what's on your mind," I said to myself.

The Bolsheviks were then only just beginning to take shape as a separate political trend, as an independent political party. Vladimir Ilyich, with all the passion and enthusiasm peculiar to him, was preparing the publication of the first Bolshevik newspaper. Its publication was preceded by the following incident.

Once, at the end of December 1904, a meeting of the Geneva group of Bolsheviks, in which there were then about 25 people, was convened. Vladimir Ilyich told us of the forthcoming appearance of the newspaper and presented in turn the editorial workers. We already knew one very well. He always spoke at Social-Democratic meetings during the heated clashes with the Mensheviks on behalf of the Bolshevik "gallery": those whom we called the Bolshevik "masses" as distinct from the leaders of the Party, who were then almost wholly Mensheviks. The comrade was therefore called "Galyorka"—a name which conveys little to the Party member of today. But he was one of the well-known Bolsheviks—M. S. Olminsky. The other editorial workers we met for the first time. They were young Bolshevik writers specially summoned abroad by Lenin.

"Comrade Schwartz," announced Vladimir Ilyich. At those words a young, tall and thin man—V. V. Vorovsky—got up and bowed comically. Then we were in the same way introduced to Voinov—A. V. Lunacharsky.

After that, Lenin set out the newspaper's programme and proposed that it be called *Vperyod* (*Forward*).

Then all the articles in the first issue were read and discussion began. The group of course gave a warm welcome to the appearance of their own Bolshevik paper.

Its name—*Vperyod*—pleased everybody. The comrades criticized the articles, made comments and expressed their wishes.

Frankly, such inner-Party democracy produced a very deep impression upon us, the "gallery."

"See how they take us into account," we thought. "It's not like it is with the 'generals' of the Mensheviks."

Such an attitude was typical of Lenin as an editor. He always very much valued the opinion of the Party masses. This was clearly reflected in the editorial announcement on the appearance of *Vperyod,* which said:

"The guiding journal must be in close touch with the Party, inseparably linked with the movement of the proletariat, going forward, pointing the way, warning against false steps. Only as a result of the collective creative work of the Party can it fulfil such a role."

The Party journal as the product of the collective creative work of the Party—that was the remarkable principle that lay at the heart of Vladimir Ilyich's editorial work.

M. S. Olminsky fulfilled the functions of manager. Through him I gradually began to participate in the work of the Party paper. I began with proofreading. I valued this work very highly. The appearance of each issue was an important event in the life of the Party. As a proofreader, I could read and savour all the articles in *Vperyod* long before the appearance of each issue. But the main thing was that I could see Vladimir Ilyich.

Once while correcting the proofs of one article I got it into my head that one point in the article was badly, incorrectly put. I read it; I read it again; yes, definitely it was no good. Excited, I consulted with the comrades and finally I decided:

"I'll go to Lenin!"

I rushed to him, showed it him, explained it. Vladimir Ilyich looked at the proof, thought for a second.

"We'll discuss it straight away."

He disappeared into the editorial office.

The minutes seemed an eternity. Then he reappeared with the proof.

"No, we've decided to leave it as it is."

To be honest, the decision stunned me. I was so certain that I was right, but my criticism had failed shamefully. I didn't even ask Vladimir Ilyich how and why, I just turned and went away.

But the feeling of dejection soon went, to be replaced by quite another.

"But all the same they *listened* to you and *discussed* your comments," I thought with satisfaction.

Such attention to the opinion of the smallest cog in the newspaper machine was very typical of Vladimir Ilyich. It was a constant feature of his newspaper work.

As a proofreader and later as technical assistant of the central newspaper, I came to know Vladimir Ilyich better as an editor. I saw how he loved the work and what importance he attached to the press in the Party's fight for its aims. It will be recalled that when he was already head of the Soviet State, in filling up questionnaires, he replied: "journalist," "writer," to the question about his profession. Vladimir Ilyich himself held the printed word in great respect and demanded the same respect from others.

It need scarcely be said that above all he demanded that an author have a sound Marxist knowledge of the question under examination. He could not tolerate "know-alls."

His second demand was a knowledge of how to set out thoughts in your own words. In an article and in correspondence he sought the vital, fresh thought, the vigorous, vivid word, the spark of talent and interesting facts. And if he found them, then he spared neither labour

nor time in working the article over, in talks and correspondence with its author.

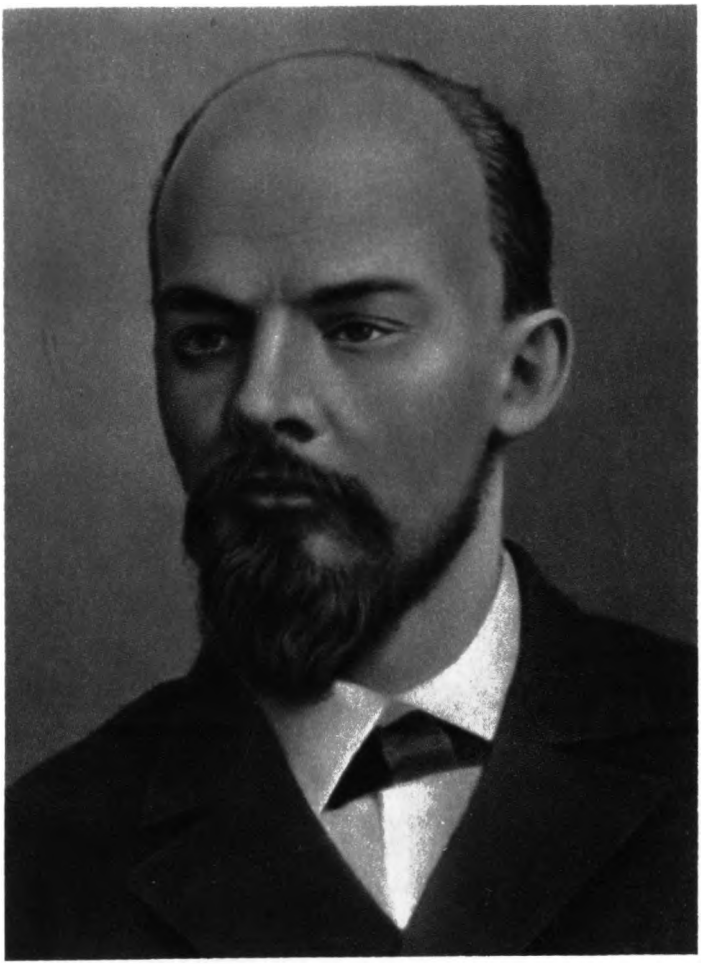
Vladimir Ilyich edited the articles and notes from workers, of which we received many, with special care and affection. He sought to preserve all the individual peculiarities of the language and style of the worker-correspondents. And, it should be added, that at that time the articles were not typed, and sometimes written in an illegible hand. But that did not stop Vladimir Ilyich: all that was of value, be it only a five-line note, was squeezed out.

Vladimir Ilyich was a strict editor, but by no means capricious. In editing an article he restricted himself to an absolute minimum of necessary corrections. His letter about one of Lunacharsky's pamphlets is very interesting here. Vladimir Ilyich liked the pamphlet, although he found several places which were carelessly formulated and which an opponent could seize upon. But he did not start to "touch up" or "correct" the manuscript.

"It would be a pity to rub out your colours and spoil something which is so vividly written," he wrote to Lunacharsky.

But if necessary, Vladimir Ilyich demanded the repeated rewriting of an article. Thus it was for example with an article by the same Lunacharsky. He was entrusted with the task of drafting the announcement of the publication of *Vperyod*. The article was a policy statement, and no inaccuracies, however slight, could be tolerated. So the author had to rewrite it three times in line with Lenin's comments.

Vladimir Ilyich always gave untiring attention to all the details of newspaper work. Clarity, brevity, precision in exposition, the expressiveness and concision of headlines, the choice of type, proofreading, the punctual appearance of the paper—Vladimir Ilyich attached great



LENIN IN 1897

significance to it all and followed it up personally. Nothing could escape his penetrating eye.

Pencil in hand, Vladimir Ilyich would himself compute how many letters would fit in using this or that type, express concern that there was so little eight-point, try to economize as much as possible on the margins, and demand that the headlines take up less space, and squeeze the "juice" out of an article.

And how he himself would edit material! Although he himself had a fine, beady handwriting, all his corrections, inserts and markings were always written most carefully. Vladimir Ilyich respected the work of the compositor, the copyist and the proofreader, as he did all work, and it would have been simply unthinkable to "scribble" words and phrases in a manuscript which the staff would then spend hours deciphering.

Many documents show how Vladimir Ilyich worked on his own books. They include not a few manuscripts without a single alteration. But Vladimir Ilyich could labour whole weeks on an already finished manuscript. The pamphlet that I have in mind was, however, the first booklet on socialism and imperialist war, and he attached special significance to it.

On July 28, 1915, Vladimir Ilyich informed me:

"The pamphlet is *already completely* written."

And in the following letter:

"I repeat, it is quite ready here. I will send it by the middle of next week, but if it is possible to speed up publication, then I'll send it without delay, as soon as I get your telegram."

Nonetheless, Vladimir Ilyich retained the absolutely finished pamphlet. Why? Because he wanted to make use of every extra day and hour to look it over once again, to think it over again and again, to redo this or that part. Only about the middle of August did Vladimir Ilyich send me the beginning of the pamphlet.

"Some things must be added and corrected in the pamphlet," he wrote to Geneva on August 16.

At various stages he sent three inserts, one footnote and three supplements. In addition, he demanded that he himself read the proofs and made corrections. In general he was very concerned about the pamphlet, in every way hastening its publication and himself going into such details as the type for titles and subtitles. Altogether work on this small booklet lasted from July 21 to October 11; during that time Vladimir Ilyich sent me 11 letters about it.

II

From proofreading I gradually went over to writing for the paper by way, as it were, of promotion. This is how it happened.

When I went abroad I took an article attacking the Socialist-Revolutionaries, which reflected the current struggle against that party, written on cigarette paper and sewn into a shoe. I was then only a beginner, still very green, repeatedly looking over and redoing my effort. Then once I summoned up courage and before the start of a meeting secretly drew Vladimir Ilyich to one side and began to read him my article.

I read with great heat, with beating heart. Vladimir Ilyich listened attentively. I went through page after page. But then I suddenly came upon something odd: I suddenly felt that my thoughts, which had seemed to me so clear and logically coherent, were in fact by no means so clear and coherent, that they were leading me to some new, so far unconsidered, questions, into a blind alley. My warmth gradually cooled and I stopped in confusion, expecting with alarm to see an ironic smile on the face of my patient listener.

"Is that all?" he asked, after a moment's silence, quite seriously.

"No ... but ... you see ... it still needs a bit more working out here...."

"Well.... Think it over well. Write, write! You'll do it!"

I went out of the room as if I was scalded. I was at once ashamed that I had thrust myself upon Lenin with my worthless bit of work and happy—happy because of that serious attitude of encouragement which Vladimir Ilyich had adopted towards me.

Soon the third issue of *Vperyod* appeared with Lenin's article on the draft programme of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, "the extreme Left-wing faction of bourgeois democracy." That article was a great help. After it I started to work on my own little article, "The Socialist-Revolutionaries at Work," which was also published in *Vperyod.*

That was how I began to contribute to *Vperyod* and later to *Proletary,* which appeared in its place as the central newspaper of the Party in accordance with the decision of the Third Party Congress.

I wrote under the pseudonym of V. Kalinin. And whenever Vladimir Ilyich greeted me in the editorial offices he invariably used this pseudonym, not my Party name, and laid special stress upon it.

"Well, Comrade Kalinin, what have you written that's new?" And he would smile meanwhile either ironically or to encourage the new contributor.

III

In literary work I got the opportunity to know Vladimir Ilyich as an editor still more closely. And I must frankly say that never in anyone have I encountered such attention to every detail of editorial work and to

the editorial workers themselves. He was a good comrade to every contributor, always ready with advice and guidance. I cannot forget one such instance. At the end of March 1917, under pledge of prompt return, Vladimir Ilyich, then in Zurich, sent copies of his famous "Letters from Afar" to me in Geneva for "information and tryout," as he told me. I was at the time simply an ordinary member of the paper's staff.

Or there is the amazing story of the newspaper cuttings. I sent Vladimir Ilyich a series of newspaper cuttings, which I had selected for an article in our magazine *Kommunist*, with the request that he return them when he had finished with them. Their return was somehow delayed. Thinking that they were lost, Vladimir Ilyich was very concerned, asking that we check to see whether they had been received by someone else; he intended to buy me the appropriate newspapers, or, if they were not on sale, personally to make a full copy for me in the library. I had to beg Vladimir Ilyich not to waste his valuable time on so trivial a matter. I really don't know how the story would have ended if the ill-starred cuttings hadn't turned up.

Vladimir Ilyich had a remarkable ability to give guidance in a simple comradely way peculiar to himself, without the slightest hint of sermonizing. The following incident will exemplify this.

In 1912—Vladimir Ilyich then lived in Krakow—I asked him about the participation of Socialists in peace congresses. I had to write an article for the legal press about the congress of bourgeois pacifists then taking place in Geneva, and in the literature which we had at the time I could not find the guidance which I needed. I should point out that I had previously visited Plekhanov, who then lived in Geneva, isolated from the rank-and-file émigrés as, one might say, an "aristocrat." When I rang the bell of his well-appointed flat I had that

feeling which a schoolboy sometimes has when for some reason or other he has to visit the home of his form-master. Although Plekhanov received me courteously and wasn't sparing in his conversation, the long, arid, somehow "official" conversation was completely unsatisfying. I did not get what I wanted. It was then that I appealed to Vladimir Ilyich.

From him soon came a short, simple and friendly letter, in which he wrote that he had not followed the recent peace congresses, and had heard—but only *heard*—of the participation of the Socialists and of the opportunist character of the recent Geneva congress.

I ask you to think. You, a young writer, find a gap in your knowledge, you decide to consult with the most knowledgeable, authoritative comrade and expect that he will censure you for your ignorance. And what happens? That comrade himself frankly confesses to you that on that particular question he knows nothing. What a delicate psychologist and splendid teacher Vladimir Ilyich showed himself to be on this occasion.

Later in this short letter we read:

"I don't intend to express a final opinion on this question, not having read the report of even one congress. It's a complicated matter."

What an instructive example for young authors. First of all study primary sources! Work and yet more work—then start to write!

Here, finally, are the most important lines from the same letter of 19 boldly-written lines: "Undoubtedly, the general growth of opportunism and the 'counter-balancing' of its forces with revol(utionary) S.-D. in the major countries of the work(ing-class) move(ment) (Germ(any)) must be mirrored here too. Let Bebel play the diplomat with the opport(unists)—*if* that is necessary

(???)—but that does not befit us. That's all that I can say at the moment."

How briefly and tersely put! And at the same time those few words give a clear indication of principle and a practical directive. It remained only to work over the problem on the basis of the actual material, making use of this guidance.

IV

The new upsurge of the revolutionary movement in 1912 gave the Party certain opportunities for the legal publication of Party papers in Russia. But of course the Bolshevik press underwent serious persecution from the tsarist authorities. Individual Party writers sought to make use of the Left Radical intellectuals' press, which readily agreed to accept their articles, as a "legal rostrum." It should be noted that the Left-wing publications enjoyed great success at that time among the revolutionary-inclined section of the public, particularly the young people. In particular, the magazine *Sovremennik* was a "fashionable," extremely "Left-wing" journal, a sort of "banner" of the progressive intellectuals.

In this way there arose the question of whether or not Party members' collaboration with the Left bourgeois press was permissible. I put the question to Vladimir Ilyich. This was his reply:

"I'm *very* glad that you are not in sympathy with *Sovremennik*: This contemptible product of a bloc of two sorts of scoundrels, Liquidationists and Narodniks, we shall abuse cruelly (Mr. Stankevich invited my co-operation; I replied: 'being in fundamental disagreement, I must reject co-operation')."

Vladimir Ilyich was not sparing of harsh words. This was always the case when he was greatly annoyed, when

it was necessary to "smash up" a widely-held but incorrect attitude to something.

But his unfavourable attitude to collaboration with the Left bourgeois press was not a general prohibition of every kind of participation by Party members in that press. Collaboration was permissible, but only in such a form, in such fields and on such issues as would ensure that it did not assume the nature of an unprincipled alliance with other parties. That was how Vladimir Ilyich decided the question.

V

The outbreak of the 1914-18 imperialist war found me in Geneva. All around Switzerland the guns were roaring. The Socialist Parties which had recently come out so strongly against war, suddenly switched over, each lining up with its "own" government in defence of "its fatherland."

The impression created in Switzerland by this base treachery to the cause of international proletarian solidarity was profound in the extreme. In 1912—almost yesterday, it seemed—there, in the ancient city of Basle, the delegates to the world congress of Socialist Parties had formed up in their columns in the spacious courtyard of the barracks and marched through the town behind their red banners. With their slogans of "War Against War," "We Demand Peace" and "We Are Against War" they had marched to the solemn ringing of church-bells to the ancient cathedral, where, in company with the Basle Parliament, the City Council and the Synod, they had listened to an address of welcome from the head of the Basle Government—a Socialist—and had enthusiastically hailed the speeches of orators and adopted a sharply-worded resolution against imperialist wars.

I remember the resounding speech of the great French tribune Jean Jaurès who, from the pulpit under the great

arches of the packed cathedral, exposed the policy of the imperialists and called upon the proletariat to protest against the imperialist war which had already begun in the Balkans. How effective was his speech, concluding with the words:

The lightning I will destroy,
The dead I will awaken,
The living I will call!

And so all these impassioned speeches proved mere words, and the devastating resolutions just scraps of paper.

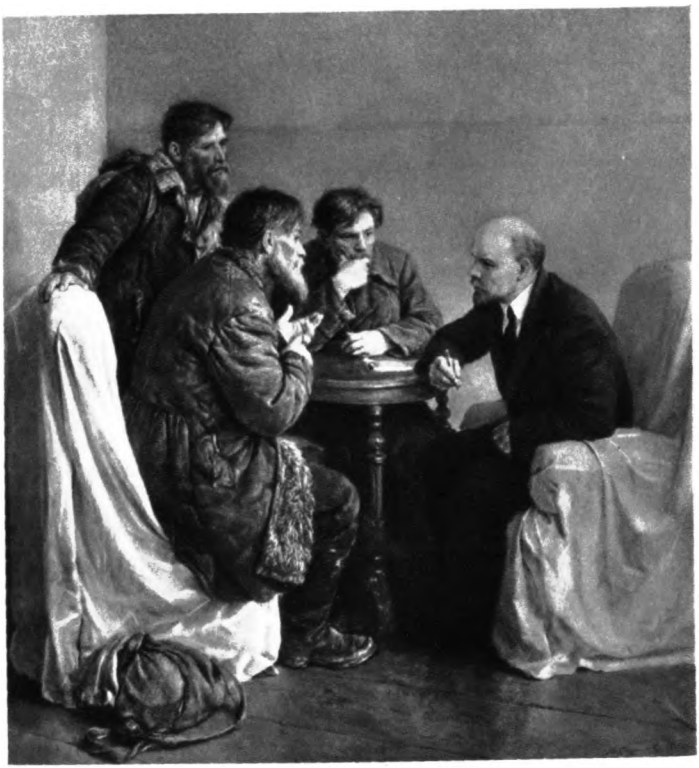
From Vladimir Ilyich there was not a word. He was then living in the little Austrian village of Poronin, near the Russian frontier, and we had many anxious days on his account.

Great indeed was our joy when suddenly we got a post card from him from Berne. Writing on September 6, Vladimir Ilyich told us:

"Arrived here safely yesterday with all my family, after brief detention in Austria."

It appeared that on August 8, soon after the outbreak of war, he had been summoned to Nowy Targ, where he was arrested on suspicion of "espionage." He was held in prison there until August 19. After his release he was able to make his way to Switzerland.

From the same Berne post card we learned with delight and triumph of Vladimir Ilyich's principled attitude towards the imperialist war. Clearly, he had already thought out a great many things in his Galician prison, pacing from one end of his solitary confinement cell to the other. Asking whether or not it was possible for us to duplicate a leaflet, he added in brackets, as something self-evident, "... against the war, of course, and against the nationalists of a new type, from Haase to Vandervelde and Guesde—rogues to a man!"



"Peasant Representatives Call on Lenin"
(from V. Serov's painting)

On the very day after his arrival Vladimir Ilyich set about restoring links with the comrades and began to talk about the revival of the illegal central newspaper *Sotsial-Demokrat* and the organization of contacts with Russia. No sooner had he gained his freedom than he moved vigorously into action against the imperialist war and the "social-patriots."

On its outbreak Plekhanov read a report on the war in Geneva which attracted the attention of the whole of the emigration. A whole arsenal of erudition, a long string of quotations from Marx and Engels, witty analogies and examples from history and literature, poisoned shafts against his opponents and so on—all this gave the speaker the appearance of an "unconquerable knight." We—the members of the Geneva group of Bolsheviks—were much more lightly armed. But all the same we gave battle.

On October 11, 1914, Plekhanov repeated his report in Lausanne. But there he was opposed by Vladimir Ilyich, who in a vigorous ten-minute assault drove his opponent from his "social-patriotic" positions, despite the latter's erudition and scintillating literary allusions. Plekhanov did not perform again (it may be that his illness was also a reason for this).

But Vladimir Ilyich carried the attack further. He spoke repeatedly in Berne, Lausanne, Geneva, Zurich and other cities. To avoid persecution, the meetings were always arranged with great circumspection—nearly always without advertisements, or with non-committal announcements, only for Party members and guests recommended by them. In this way Vladimir Ilyich was able to wage an oral campaign among the emigrants against the imperialist war and "social-patriotism."

Under war conditions, it was incredibly difficult to organize the publication and transportation to Russia of

Sotsial-Demokrat, when intervention by the Swiss police, military authorities, trial or deportation on the pretext of "violation of neutrality" could be expected any day. Vladimir Ilyich demanded the strictest security and recommended that we seek the protection of influential Swiss citizens, members of Parliament.

How modest indeed Vladimir Ilyich had to be in his publishing programme! Of the publication of an anti-war manifesto he wrote:

"... Publish a few (200-300).... They will be sent to Paris and Russia: one hundred copies abroad, 200 to Russia."

Three hundred copies! This was the prescribed "homeopathic" dose for the publication of the first Bolshevik leaflet against the imperialist war and the social-traitors. It was proposed to print a mere 500 copies of the Party's central newspaper.

"The circulation is small," Vladimir Ilyich explained, "since along the road we are travelling we cannot count upon the casual supporter...."

But how he triumphed, how he rejoiced when our newspaper began to appear and to be delivered to Russia.

On November 14, 1914, just two weeks after the appearance of the first (33rd) number of *Sotsial-Demokrat*, Vladimir Ilyich wrote:

"You will be pleased to hear the good news that the paper has been delivered to one of the points not far from the frontier and evidently will be shortly shipped across. Congratulations!"

In summer of the next year Vladimir Ilyich was already able to report that articles from *Sotsial-Demokrat* were being reprinted in St. Petersburg and distributed to other cities.

Vladimir Ilyich proved to be a giant able to hurl resounding words among the masses, able to wake the "dead" and lead the living into battle.

VI

In Soviet years I met Vladimir Ilyich fairly frequently, particularly in connection with the peasant newspaper *Bednota* (*The Poor Peasantry*).

Vladimir Ilyich was very fond of chatting with workers and peasants. For him, to know the opinion and mood of the rank-and-file worker or peasant was no less important than knowing the views of a member of the Central Committee or a member of the Council of People's Commissars.

In one of her letters Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya told me that Vladimir Ilyich was a passionate friend of the workers, always particularly anxious to talk to them of things near and dear to them, and valuing their opinion highly.

In just the same way, while bearing a superhuman burden of the most important government and Party work, Vladimir Ilyich always found time to talk to a peasant representative who came to see him, to a worker from the countryside and with the editor of a peasant newspaper.

He valued the letters which peasants sent to the newspaper highly.

"These, you know, are genuine human documents! I hear nothing like it in any report!"

That was what Vladimir Ilyich said to me when, as editor of *Bednota*, I went to him and showed him letters from peasants. He listened long and attentively to how the countryside was living, to accounts of its ills.

"Well, what does our 'peasant barometer' show?"

That was how our talk usually began—"peasant barometer" was the name Vladimir Ilyich gave to *Bednota*.

I remember one of our chats particularly clearly. It was during the winter of 1920-21, when times were extremely hard, the end of the Civil War when the sacrifices and deprivations of the working people were at their height. Economy in the countryside was in an unprecedented decline. The mass of the peasants were seized by alarm and profound discontent. The most steadfast and forward-looking peasants began to waver. The peasants flooded *Bednota* with letters containing complaints and protests. To "let off steam" we published one of the bitterest, indicting the Soviet power. Then we were deluged with letters in its defence. A heated discussion began in the columns of the paper.

I went to talk things over with Vladimir Ilyich. On this occasion our chat continued for a particularly long time. On each point Vladimir Ilyich virtually showered me with questions. And of each letter he invariably asked:

"Who is it writing? A kulak? A poor peasant? A middle peasant?"

I answered, sometimes shrugging my shoulders: the social position of our correspondent was not always known.

Our talk ended with a request for a detailed written report with extracts from the peasants' letters.

More than 50 such letters dealing with *prodrazvyorstka** and the serious plight of the peasants were chosen, studied and included in a report to Vladimir Ilyich personally. And soon I was convinced that the digest of peasant letters was not compiled for nothing. Listening to Lenin's report to the Tenth Party Congress on the

* *Prodrazvyorstka*—the agricultural surplus-appropriation system employed by the Soviet authorities during the period of War Communism (1918-20), under which the state took all surplus grain and fodder, over and above the levels laid down for personal use, cattle food and seed, from the peasant holdings at fixed prices.—*Ed.*

substitution of the tax in kind for the surplus-appropriation system, I felt at a number of points that he had used the peasants' letters as material.

Thereafter Vladimir Ilyich called for regular reports from *Bednota* on letters from peasants. I still have a small piece of paper bearing his beady handwriting. Here it is word for word:

"26.I.1922
"Cde. Karpinsky,

"Could you briefly (two or three pages maximum) inform me:

"How many letters has *Bednota* had from peasants?

"What is important (specially important) in them?

"Mood?

"Evils of the day?

"Could you send me a similar letter say *once every two months* (the next by 15.III.1922)?

a) average number of letters
b) mood
c) major evils of the day

With Comm. greetings,

Lenin."

In March 1922, at my request Lenin sent an article for the fourth anniversary of *Bednota*. To the article was attached a note in which, recalling his sickness, Vladimir Ilyich said:

"As a result I cannot write anything decent for *Bednota*'s fourth anniversary. If this is suitable, publish it; if not, it would be best to throw it into the waste-paper basket. Yours, Lenin."

All of us in the editorial office were struck when we read that. Usually, practically every author is inclined to consider his article an outstanding work, worthy of immediate publication in the "next issue" and in no other place than the "most prominent." I must confess that never in my editorial life had I come across so modest an author, who himself advises that it would be best to throw his work into the waste-paper basket.

Vladimir Ilyich's article was published in *Bednota* on March 26, 1922. In it he wrote: "The alliance of the workers and peasants—that is what Soviet Power gave us. Therein lies the strength of Soviet Power. Therein lies the guarantee of our success and final victory."

S. I. GOPNER

LENIN IN PARIS

After the thoroughgoing "failures" in Odessa and Ekaterinoslav at the end of the summer of 1910, and after countless attempts to continue underground Party work at home, I nonetheless had to leave Russia. Outwitting the police, I got a passport and in September found myself in Paris.

I had scarcely got accustomed to the pleasant feeling of liberation from the clutches of the police and the "all-seeing eye" of the tsarist secret police before I began to experience a feeling of aimlessness. I remembered all that I had heard while still in Russia of the hardships of the life of the emigrant. I was troubled by problems like: am I any use to anyone here, what shall I do, will I be able to make a living?

At that time, after the defeat of the first Russian revolution, Paris was one of the main centres for political emigrants. To it came many revolutionaries, escaping from the courts, from prison, from tsarist penal servitude and exile. For the majority life was very hard.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin was then living in Paris, and I dreamt of meeting him but did not know how to bring

it about. It seemed to me that my visit would be of no interest to him and that I had nothing new to tell him.

These doubts were ended by a comrade whom I met on the street on the day after my arrival. Learning of my hesitation, he was indignant. "Can't you understand, Natasha (my underground code name), that Ilyich seizes hold of every new arrival from Russia like a hungry man seizes food?" And indeed I later learned that meetings with people newly-arrived from Russia were for Lenin a source of the latest information about the state of affairs at home. Far from his native land, Lenin read a great many Russian newspapers and magazines and carried on a lively correspondence with Party comrades. In his talk with the writer Emil Ludwig on December 13, 1931, Stalin said: "Very few of those who remained in Russia were so closely in touch with events there, with the workers' movement within the country, as was Lenin, although he was far from its borders. On every occasion that I visited him abroad—in 1906, 1907, 1912 and 1913 —I saw his piles of letters from those engaged in day-to-day work in Russia, and he always knew more than those who stayed there."

From the same comrade whom I met in the street I learnt the time and place of the next meeting of the Paris Bolshevik group. There, in a small room above a café, I at once caught sight of Lenin. He was sitting in a corner, intent on a game of chess. I didn't recognize him from his pictures, because at that time, for reasons of security, pictures of Lenin were not circulated. I recognized him because I had seen and heard him once before in Finland in 1907, and once having seen Lenin, it was impossible not to recognize him at a second meeting. The mind, the heart and the attention of all of us were indivisibly bound up with our great leader and teacher, and his unique and

inimitable qualities were imprinted for ever in our memory.

His characteristic features, reflected in his external appearance, were his concentration and singleness of purpose. They were manifest daily in connection with even the most insignificant things. This was shown with great precision and verisimilitude in the little sequence from the film "Lenin in October." In a corridor at Smolny Lenin found a little girl, lost by someone, and took her to his own study. He gave her a piece of paper and a pencil and sat her down at a table to draw, while he himself continued to work at his desk. Then he got up and began to walk to and fro, stopped and, over the girl's shoulder, began to look at her drawing. When I saw the picture, I was struck by the faithful manner in which the actor conveyed the concentration and seriousness with which Lenin examined the drawing and then began to explain to the girl how to correct it!

But let us get back to the story of the first meetings with Lenin. At the meeting at which I saw him comparatively minor day-to-day business was being discussed. Lenin spoke for not more than five or ten minutes. More than 50 years have passed since then and unfortunately I don't remember what he said. But I shall never forget how he completely altered the way I felt. The tiredness, the physical depression disappeared completely. It was as though I had recovered from a serious illness.

After the meeting Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya came up to me. In a tone of friendly reproach she said: "So you are the Natasha who didn't want to come and see us! But Ilyich has given me the task of bringing you along without fail. Come tomorrow at 8 p.m."

Precisely at the appointed hour I arrived at 4, Rue Marie Rose. I remember how agitated I was, still not

knowing what there was new in the life of the Party that I could tell Lenin.

I was taken straight into the "reception room"—the small kitchen where against the wall opposite the gas stove stood a not very large oblong table covered with oilcloth. This "reception room" was at the same time the "dining-room." I was offered a place at table for evening tea and a modest supper and Vladimir Ilyich, Nadezhda Konstantinovna and her old mother also sat down.

I still didn't know how to begin my story. But as soon as Vladimir Ilyich had said his first words, after his first questions, I suddenly saw the life I had lived during recent months in a new light. I myself felt a new interest in what I told Lenin and became imbued with a consciousness of its usefulness. The reason for this change was the close attention with which Vladimir Ilyich listened. By rare, careful questions, Lenin, unnoticed by me, guided my story and did not let me spoil it. Increasingly drawn, I told of the events of 1909 and 1910 in Odessa, Nikolayev and Ekaterinoslav: of the attempts to publish a printed Party paper in Odessa, of the police raid on the print-shop, of a similar attempt in Ekaterinoslav, of the work of the underground groups, of the infiltration of secret police agents, of the arrests and the forthcoming trial of the Odessa Bolshevik Committee.

That evening I for the first time experienced the compelling influence that Lenin had on people. Many of his contemporaries have in their memoirs underlined his capacity to listen. Simply by his silent attention and very few questions Lenin emboldened his partner in conversation. This characteristic of Lenin became one of the best Bolshevik traditions. The ability to listen is not only a means of becoming better acquainted with this or that question. It is the best means of studying people, of aid-

ing their education and moral and political development, and at the same time a means of making the best use of them in the work of the Party.

By the end of the conversation I felt that here, too, in emigration, I was of use to the Party. I was especially emboldened when Vladimir Ilyich proposed to set out my account in the form of a brief report for the Party's newspaper, *Sotsial-Demokrat*, published in Paris and shipped secretly to Russia.

During that meeting I also saw a clear example of that spirit of organization which Lenin observed in everything and everywhere. At the very beginning of my visit I asked Lenin how much time he could give to talking with me. Vladimir Ilyich replied that "there's plenty of time and since we are combining talk with tea-drinking, we have an hour or an hour and a half at our disposal." When, carried away by the story, I had forgotten the time, Lenin suddenly glanced at his watch; clearly the allocated time had passed. I made haste to finish. Lenin heard me out, quickly took his glass of tea from the table, repeated his proposal to write a report, bade me a friendly good-bye and went into his study.

Only many years later, when his full collected works were published, did we really appreciate the colossal amount of work—theoretical, political and organizational—that Vladimir Ilyich did during those years. But even then, in Paris, we all knew that Lenin valued time very highly, and that not even a minute should be taken from him for nothing.

But all the same Vladimir Ilyich when necessary found time to help a comrade in trouble. Once, returning home late, I found a note. It said that on the previous evening Lenin had been told of the serious position of Comrade Kurnatovsky, who was sick, and that it had been decided

to transfer him from one hospital to another. On behalf of Lenin I was asked to go to one of my acquaintances, a prominent French surgeon, and to ask him to arrange the transfer. The note ended by asking that I should tell Lenin of the time when I would go and also of the results of the negotiations. After ringing up the surgeon, I let Vladimir Ilyich know that the appointment would be on the following day at 12 o'clock. That same evening I got another note saying that Lenin wanted to come with me and that he would call for me by 11.

Knowing Vladimir Ilyich's punctuality, I began to listen for the bell at the agreed time. Suddenly I heard some sort of noise on the stairs and rushed to open the door. It proved to be Lenin, who was rapidly mounting the stairs to the fifth floor. As always he was vigorous and full of youthful strength.

I also remembered another detail of this meeting. Seeing on the table a postcard reproduction of one of the pictures of the *peredvizhniki*,* he looked at it closely and said quietly: "How well these pictures of the *peredvizhniki* convey Russian life."

We went by Metro to the other end of Paris. Together with the interview, the journey there and back took up some two hours. Only those closely acquainted with his work understood what two hours meant for Lenin.

Sensitive and attentive to his comrades, Lenin was at the same time very strict and exacting towards himself. His personal example, his exactness and tremendous influence preserved the Bolshevik workers abroad from

* *Peredvizhniki*—democratically-minded artists, forming the Association of Travelling (*Peredvizhniye*) Exhibitions, organized in 1870 on the initiative of the artists G. Myasoyedov, V. Perov, and I. Kramskoi. They championed realism and purpose in art against academicism.

the harmful effects of life in the emigration. The majority of our comrades courageously bore enforced idleness and extreme material need. The members of the organization enthusiastically fulfilled varied Party assignments, including the most petty and tedious technical work. To get the money to publish the Party newspaper we organized parties and sometimes shows. Lenin did not go to the parties although he approved them, since they provided resources for the Party's needs. At the same time, in conversation with us, the organizers, he stressed that we bore full responsibility for seeing that the entertainment at these parties was of a high standard and for preventing anything which might discredit us as Party members. And when once we presented Gorky's play *Chudaki,* Vladimir Ilyich himself came along.

Not wishing to be burdens upon the emigration treasury (which, it should be said in passing, was often empty), the Bolsheviks persistently sought work, taking whatever was offered: teaching, translating, typing, even furniture-removing and washing-down cars.

Its healthy moral and political condition sharply distinguished the Bolshevik group from the other emigrant groups in Paris. A prominent member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party once asked me: "Why are you Bolsheviks different from everybody else? When we meet you, we feel that you have something special inside you, some special firmness, your own special world."

Yes, indeed, we did have our "special world." It was the world of the Bolshevik Party. We were preparing for a revolution. It was during those years that, under Lenin's guidance, the Bolsheviks were being formed into a special Party, a Party of a new type, distinct from the customary Social-Democratic parties, free from opportunist elements, capable of leading the proletariat into the

struggle for power. Despite the most arduous conditions of the revolutionary underground, the Party in Russia was already a great force, to which belonged the future. Our "special world" of Bolsheviks was one in which our Party did not for a single day cease the struggle for the cause of the people. We were happy to live and fight under Lenin's banner.

E. D. STASOVA

TEACHER AND FRIEND

I first heard of Vladimir Ilyich from Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya. We were then both teachers at the workers' Sunday schools and often met. From that time our link was not broken, despite the difficulties of being in the underground and in emigration.

I remember Vladimir Ilyich's letters to Russia from abroad in 1902-05. We were then waging a great struggle with *Rabochaya Mysl* and its disciples, the "Economists," and later with the Mensheviks. When, as a result of arrests, comrades fell out of our ranks it was with great caution that we involved other people, while in letters to Vladimir Ilyich we complained that we were short of people. In 1905 Vladimir Ilyich in one of his letters sharply condemned us for this. "Young forces are necessary," he said. "I would advise shooting on the spot those who dare to say that there are no people. In Russia there are crowds of people, it is necessary only more widely and boldly, more boldly and widely, and again more widely and again more boldly, to recruit young people, *without being afraid of them.*"

In the stormy days of the First Russian Revolution, teaching us how to prepare an armed uprising against

tsarist autocracy, Lenin wrote: "Go to the young people. Set up fighting groups *now*, anywhere and everywhere, both among the students and among the *workers especially*, etc., etc. Let detachments of from 3 to 10, to 30, etc., be organized straight away. Let them immediately arm themselves, each as best he can—a revolver, a knife, rags and paraffin to start fires, etc."

At the end of August, 1905, I was sent to Geneva to head all the technical work of the Central Committee. There it was that I saw Vladimir Ilyich for the first time. On arrival, I went to "the Ilyichs." This was the home of Vladimir Ilyich, Nadezhda Konstantinovna and her mother, Elizaveta Vasilyevna. I found Vladimir Ilyich alone. He gave me a chair in the general room (it was simultaneously kitchen and dining-room) and started to question me about everything: St. Petersburg, the St. Petersburg Committee and of what was being done in Russia. Just previously, in the spring and summer of 1905, there had been the conferences of doctors, teachers, lawyers and other groups of intellectuals; they had created unions which formed the "Union of Unions." I told Vladimir Ilyich how we had fought with the liberals at these conferences and in the unions. He heard me out and said: "You know, you should give a report on this to our local Russian colony." I was disconcerted, because never before had I delivered a report. But Vladimir Ilyich convinced me that it was necessary. In preparing the report I came to understand what a remarkable teacher and comrade Vladimir Ilyich was. He patiently pointed out to me the shortcomings in the plan and then in the thesis of the report. He chaired the meeting and at the conclusion of the report again in a few words pointed out my mistakes.

At a meeting of Russian Social-Democrats on October 20 (November 2, New Style), 1905, I heard Vladimir Ilyich as an orator for the first time. He read a paper on polit-

ical developments in Russia. His speech has remained for ever in my memory. He so gripped his audience, his speech was permeated with such iron logic, that rarely did anyone directly and openly oppose him. Mensheviks were also present when he spoke, but they made not a single interjection. Ilyich was not interrupted. And when he had finished, not one of them opposed him. Only next day in personal arguments did they voice their objections to Vladimir Ilyich's arguments.

Lenin's manner of speaking was very simple. He usually walked backwards and forwards, sometimes putting his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat, sometimes throwing out his right arm, index finger extended. When I later heard Plekhanov, I could not but contrast the two. Plekhanov was a brilliant orator, who spoke beautifully, with a great range of voice and the gestures of an actor, but he lacked the force of Lenin's logic, his power to convince.

Vladimir Ilyich was always full of exceptional concern for the comrades. I will tell you of one incident from my own life which took place at the end of October of that same 1905. I was then living in a Geneva pension. Once Vladimir Ilyich called on me and started to ask about our work with Bauman in Moscow, how we had been together in prison. I said that Bauman had been kept in solitary confinement and that we in prison had sought means to get in touch with him and keep him informed about the course of events. After the court had rejected the hearing of our case, we sought Bauman's release on bail, but were unsuccessful. After listening to me, Vladimir Ilyich said: "Nadya* was able to secure Nikolai Ernestovich's release, but it was by no means for the best, because soon after he was killed by Black Hundreds." Only then did Vladimir Ilyich give me an

* Nadya—Party code name of Bauman's wife, Kapitolina Polikarpovna Medvedeva.—*Ed.*

English newspaper which reported Bauman's assassination. Knowing my friendship for him, Vladimir Ilyich did not wish that I should learn of his death from a newspaper.

Or here are yet other examples, relating to a different period when, after the establishment of the Soviet government, I was working as secretary of the Central Committee. Vladimir Ilyich frequently reproached A. D. Tsyurupa for adopting a negligent attitude towards his health. A Communist, said Lenin, is state property and should not be wasted. When he learnt that F. Dzerzhinsky had worked so hard that he was spitting blood and refused to rest, he phoned me and proposed the adoption of a Central Committee resolution to the effect that F. Dzerzhinsky be prescribed two weeks' leave at Narofominsk. At that time the best state farm in the Moscow area was at Narofominsk and Dzerzhinsky could get good food there. Vladimir Ilyich, who always thought things out to the last detail, also took into account the fact that there was no telephone at the farm, so Dzerzhinsky would not phone Moscow and would therefore get a better rest. Lenin showed concern that one comrade should get footwear, and another a hat, and that in all the offices of the Council of People's Commissars there should be decanters of water and glasses for visitors.

Then I should like to say a word about Lenin's extraordinary modesty. To the item in one questionnaire: "What languages do you know?" he replied that he knew "English, German, French—badly, Italian—very badly." In fact, that was by no means the case. I remember that in June 1920, not long before the Second Congress of the Comintern, two representatives of the French Socialist Party, one of them Marseille Cachin, a founder of the French Communist Party, arrived in Moscow. When the Central Committee members assembled in Vladimir Ilyich's office, he placed me close to him, so that I, who

knew French, could in case of need help him in conversation with the French comrades. The conversation lasted an hour and a half, and all that time Lenin talked freely in French with the visiting comrades. In the course of the whole conversation I only had to prompt him on two or three words.

Vladimir Ilyich valued time very highly. Sessions of the Central Committee were usually fixed for 10 a.m. Vladimir Ilyich opened them no later than 10.15. The time for speakers was strictly controlled; usually they got two minutes. He kept a check on them with a watch. He permitted no talking during sessions. As soon as anyone started to talk, he threatened them with his finger, saying: "Ssh" and indicated that they should write. If you want to tell some comrade something, then write it down, but don't interfere with others by talking. Therefore, there was a great exchange of notes during sessions. In the chair, Lenin simultaneously made the necessary notes for his concluding remarks and exchanged notes with those present. Smoking was forbidden, and to go out even more so. So many smokers would, like schoolboys, sit around the large tiled stove that stood in Vladimir Ilyich's office and puff up the chimney. When voting was under way, Lenin, slyly wrinkling his nose, would ironically ask: "And how do the smoke-house masters vote?"

On Lenin's 50th birthday I was ill and could not see him. But I wanted to give Vladimir Ilyich a pleasant surprise. Going through my things, I came across a cartoon by the well-known cartoonist Karrik depicting the birthday of the Narodnik Mikhailovsky. At a table covered with a cloth stood Mikhailovsky, deeply moved. In one hand he held his pince-nez, and in the other a handkerchief with which he had just wiped his tears. He was surrounded by Yuzhakov, Myakotin, Struve and Kalmykova, while in front of the table stood two children: a

boy in a sailor suit and a girl of that age when pigtails resemble rat's tails. These "Little Marxists" had come to greet the Narodniks. I wrote to Lenin that this is how it was then—we were still children, but now we are a great Party, and all this thanks to your work and your talent. The cartoon delighted him.

That evening, Vladimir Ilyich, speaking at a meeting to mark his 50th birthday, organized by the Moscow Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), showed the cartoon to those present. He delivered a speech in which he made fun of fine speeches made on birthdays and briefly described the road traversed by our Party, speaking of the difficulties lying ahead and calling upon us not to be deflected by our successes, not to become complacent. In that speech Lenin, as in all his work, clearly revealed the features inherent in him: exceptional modesty, sobriety in estimating the situation and hostility to glorification and pompous phrases.

G. I. PETROVSKY

OUR WISE LEADER

I met Lenin at the end of 1912, when together with other Bolshevik members of the Fourth State Duma I took part in the conference of the Party Central Committee and Party workers in Krakow. This conference, it will be recalled, was for security reasons called the "February" conference. Lenin was elected its chairman.

We working-class Duma members were impressed by the modesty and simplicity of Vladimir Ilyich, in whose home the conference was held and where we also ate our meals prepared by Krupskaya with the aid of the women participants in the conference. We were also amazed by Lenin's knowledge of the mood of the Russian workers, although he had been a long time in emigration, by the care with which he had studied all questions relating to the labour movement and by the profundity with which he had generalized individual phenomena, teaching us, the practitioners of revolution, to do likewise.

Here is a typical example. After the conference Vladimir Ilyich spoke to each of the Duma members separate-

ly, asking them about work in their constituencies. In talking to me, he was interested in the state of the labour movement in the South in 1912, as compared with 1897-1900, when Babushkin worked in Ekaterinoslav*. I replied that then the class-conscious workers in the factories were individuals, while in 1912 there were scores, and in some cases, hundreds.

"And what," asked Vladimir Ilyich, "is the attitude of the workers today towards the demand for a democratic republic, after the period of reaction? They've probably become less bold, more timid, retreated more into themselves?"

I was amazed: how did Lenin know of these things? I confirmed what he said, for indeed, when at a number of workers' meetings I had used the words "we must fight for a democratic republic," the workers somehow became diffident. Lenin explained that this was the result of years of reaction and repression and of the corrupting influence of the Mensheviks, who had implanted fear and timidity in the workers.

I went on to tell Lenin of the distribution of *Pravda*. He asked: what if together with *Pravda* we were to issue supplements called *Donets Miner* or *Urals Worker*?

Guiding the work of the Bolshevik Party, Lenin during those years clearly foresaw the oncoming First World War and penetratingly foretold the inevitability of proletarian revolution. The following events will demonstrate this.

During May-June, 1914, the then chairman of the Second International, Vandervelde, came to St. Petersburg. Behind talk of the need to establish unity of the working class, he wanted to "end" the split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, and to subordinate the revolutionary labour movement of Russia to the latter.

* I. V. Babushkin (1873-1906)—an outstanding Bolshevik revolutionary.—*Ed.*

Together with *Pravda*, the Bolshevik group in the Fourth State Duma was then the legal centre of the Bolshevik Party in Russia. Apart from the five Bolshevik members of the Duma, elected by the workers' curia, there were seven Menshevik members elected by petty-bourgeois voters. Vandervelde declared that his task included the study of which group had the backing of the majority of the Russian proletariat. In fact, he intended to merge the workers' Bolshevik members with the Mensheviks, so that, in the event of the outbreak of imperialist war, a united Social-Democratic group should vote in support of it and in support of arms credits.

Lenin foresaw this move by the leaders of the Second International. He guided the work of the Bolshevik group in the Fourth State Duma from abroad. Learning of Vandervelde's arrival in St. Petersburg, Lenin proposed that we Bolshevik members of the Duma receive him and show him who had the support of the working class in the capital and throughout Russia. I was given the task of inviting Vandervelde to the *Pravda* offices. There first of all the chairman of the Second International was addressed by the Bolshevik Duma members. They gave an accurate picture of the state of the labour movement in Russia. Also to *Pravda*'s offices came the chairmen and secretaries of trade-union executives to tell Vandervelde of the situation in the unions, their strength, their resources, and so on. They declared that the mass of the workers and the unions themselves supported *Pravda's* point of view—that is, the Bolsheviks.

At a joint meeting of Bolshevik and Menshevik members of the State Duma we called for unity of the labour movement on the basis of the principles set out by *Pravda*. We pointed out that differences in principle with the Mensheviks excluded the possibility of any merger with them. After the meeting Vandervelde visited the executives of several unions. The facts compelled him to ac-

knowledge that the Bolsheviks had the predominant influence in the Russian labour movement. He went away empty-handed.

The fact that the mass of the workers were behind the Bolsheviks was shown by the elections of delegates to the Second International's Congress, which it was proposed to hold in Vienna. The overwhelming majority of mandates were given to *Pravda* supporters. The Menshevik Plekhanovites did not get any. They begged us for just one for Plekhanov. We replied that we would give them one, if Plekhanov would defend our Party's platform. The St. Petersburg Committee and the Bolshevik members of the Duma soon sent me abroad to Lenin in order to settle a number of important issues of Party work and especially to report to him on Vandervelde's visit to the Russian capital. I took him material on the attitude of the trade unions and other workers' mass organizations. Lenin was then living in Poronin, where he had rented rooms in a small peasant house. All our discussions took place on its veranda.

I told Lenin of the manner in which we had received Vandervelde. Vladimir Ilyich wholly approved all that we had done and commented that my own arrival was most timely. The Brussels Conference, called by the Bureau of the Second International to discuss the question of a Bolshevik-Menshevik merger, was then under way. The Mensheviks were spreading the rumour that Lenin was in Brussels but did not want to appear at the Conference.

The Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks), the Organization Committee (Mensheviks), the Plekhanov "Yedinstvo" (Unity) group and others were represented at the Brussels Conference, held from July 16-18, 1914. The Bolshevik Central Committee sent M. F. Vladimirsky, Inessa Armand and I. F. Popov. The leaders of the Second International adopted an extremely unfriendly atti-

tude towards our comrades, who reported to Lenin on the unfavourable situation in which they found themselves.

Under the guise of "conciliation" between the Bolsheviks and the Liquidationists and the establishment of "peace" in the Party, the Second International leaders demanded that the Bolsheviks end their criticism of the Liquidationists' conciliatory policy and merge with them. The Bolsheviks did not yield to the Mensheviks and rejected the attempts of the Second International opportunists to interfere in the Party's internal affairs. Lenin guided the work of the delegation from Poronin. He wrote the report of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. which was read at the Conference in French by Inessa Armand and also the brief for the Committee's representatives.

After hearing my account, Vladimir Ilyich proposed to send all the material and newspapers which I had brought from St. Petersburg to Brussels to help our delegation. This was done. He and I signed a telegram to the International Socialist Bureau, saying that we were sending by post material concerning Vandervelde's visit to Petersburg. A copy of the telegram was sent to our delegation. Our material made a great impression at the Conference and did good service in exposing the tales of the Mensheviks.

In connection with the Brussels Conference Vladimir Ilyich summed up the events of that time and the policy of the Second International's leaders who were striving to bring about a merger of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks and thus destroy the influence of the Bolsheviks in the labour movement. Lenin commented that much work remained to be done before the situation in the international labour movement was changed and people devoted to the working class and proletarian revolution stood at the helm of the Socialist International. Lenin was pro-

foundly convinced of the victory of the Russian revolution and of the world revolution.

At that time the lightning of revolution was already flashing in Russia. A wave of strikes was sweeping across the country. There were great stoppages in the Donbas. In Petersburg, the strike movement had developed into open clashes with the police and Cossacks. In the workers' district of the capital, the Vyborg Side, barricades had appeared. The waves of revolution were washing the foundations of the tsarist regime with increasing force. Expressing belief in the impending victory of the revolution, Lenin proposed that I speedily complete my work abroad and return to Russia, since, as Vladimir Ilyich said, a Bolshevik member of the Duma must be at his post. With a consignment of illegal literature I left Poronin for Russia and, arriving in Petersburg, found the barricades still up on the Vyborg Side.

After the October Revolution, when Lenin became head of the Soviet Government and his name became known to millions of working people throughout the world, he continued to be a modest, considerate comrade, extremely attentive to the opinions of his colleagues. Having evolved the principle of collective party leadership, Lenin himself adhered to it.

Here is a clear example which indicates Lenin's character. On April 5, 1920, the delegates to the Ninth Party Congress honoured him on the occasion of his approaching 50th birthday. After two speeches, Vladimir Ilyich said that it was quite sufficient and proposed that the Congress go on to discuss the urgent problems of the Party and Soviet construction. But the delegates did not agree: they wanted to express their feelings and their deep affection for Lenin. So Lenin left the hall. It was extremely characteristic of him: he could not suffer laudatory speeches about himself. My turn to take the chair came. I was told that Vladimir Ilyich wanted me on the

phone. He asked what was going on at the Congress. "They are still discussing Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's fiftieth birthday," I replied. He insistently demanded that I, as chairman, put an end to the discussion. But it was impossible.

Vladimir Ilyich taught us Communists modesty, he taught us that the interests of the Party and the working class which we serve must come first.

WORKERS OF THE TRYOKHGORNAYA TEXTILE MILL RECALL MEETINGS WITH LENIN

After the Revolution Vladimir Ilyich Lenin frequently attended meetings of the workers of the Moscow factories and plants, among them the Tryokhgornaya mill.

There are in existence some 40 written accounts of Lenin's visits to Tryokhgornaya, the recollections of old working men and women of the mill.

Lenin greatly valued the revolutionary tradition of the workers of this mill. The first secretary of the mill's Party group, V. Gorshkov, recalls that Lenin "particularly underlined its heroic participation in the struggles of 1905 and expressed the certainty that Tryokhgornaya would be one of the citadels of Soviet Power."

During 1919-21 Lenin visited the mill several times and was always warmly welcomed by all the men and women who worked there. "The workers were very fond of Ilyich; he had only to put in an appearance for big meetings to be organized for him. His arrival at the mill was a great event for us," says a worker, F. Rumyantsev.

The workers tell how, holding their breath, they listened to Lenin. With each word he spoke, the certainty of victory grew in their hearts, their will to struggle, to overcome all the difficulties encountered on our way forward, mounted. The people had a profound belief in every word that Lenin spoke, for each breathed truth and wisdom.

The Tryokhgornaya workers would surround Lenin and ask him questions about all the problems which interested them. He willingly spoke with them and answered all their questions. His speeches found the way straight to their hearts. Every word was a part of their life and understandable to them, firing them, inspiring them to new feats of labour.

The Tryokhgornaya men and women workers, after every speech by their leader, would heatedly discuss everything that had been said. Lenin did not hide the difficulties, nor did he slur over them. His speeches mobilized them to overcome all the obstacles standing in the way of the proletarian revolution. "Even those who were at first depressed and whose spirits were low seemed reborn; after Ilyich's visit we felt surer of ourselves and worked with new strength," recalls A. Zharova.

By his simple, clear words and practical advice Lenin gave the workers courage and confidence in ultimate victory over the forces of domestic and foreign counter-revolution. "It was during the days of the blockade," V. Gorshkov and F. Rumyantsev recall. "The Tryokhgornaya workers were talking about 'capitalist encirclement'; faces were flushed, eyes fevered, hearts heavy. Then Ilyich came. He described all the difficulties and achievements of the revolution, and outlined just what were the tasks of the moment. And all the bitterness passed as at the touch of a hand." Lenin linked the complex problems

of international and home affairs with the day-to-day practical jobs of the workers of the mill. Once, wanting to help the workers with their difficult food situation, Lenin gave them some practical advice: "Repair wagons, repair engines and bring your own wheat." They did as Lenin suggested.

Lenin was full of consideration and thought for the children of the Tryokhgornaya workers. After one of his speeches, children of the workers delivered declamations and sang revolutionary songs. Vladimir Ilyich listened attentively and with affection. The Tryokhgornaya worker S. Y. Zenkovich says: "I remember another visit by Lenin to the mill in 1920, at a Moscow City Soviet election meeting. Vladimir Ilyich reported as a member of the City Soviet and deputy from Tryokhgornaya. After his speech he stayed at the mill and spoke with the workers. Everyone knew that Vladimir Ilyich was fond of children. One little chap—six years old he was then—went up to him and said: 'Uncle Ilyich, I'm a Bolshevik and Communist too!' Lenin laughed, took the lad in his arms and declared: 'Just look what Bolsheviks and Communists there are growing up here!' "

Lenin's visit to Tryokhgornaya on the day of the All-Russian May Day *Subbotnik* (day of voluntary, unpaid work) produced a deep impression upon the workers. On this *Subbotnik* the Tryokhgornaya workers went to Khoroshevo, and, because of the large number taking part, received only half-rations. After the *Subbotnik* there was a meeting attended by Lenin. "I saw him," says F. Rumyantsev, "at the 1920 May Day *Subbotnik*. He simply came and, sitting down on a piece of timber, spoke to the Tryokhgornaya workers; I shall always remember Ilyich thus: simple, considerate, near and dear to us." News of Lenin's arrival at Tryokhgornaya spread with the speed

of lightning and within a few minutes the canteen was filled to capacity. When Lenin began to speak there was absolute silence. "Vladimir Ilyich," writes S. Zenkovich in his recollections, "first explained that the insufficiency of food was not the fault of the organizers of the *Subbotnik*, but that throughout the whole of Moscow many more people than was supposed—more than 1,500,000—had joined in the *Subbotnik* and that each would receive the rest of his ration within two or three days. That was what he promised, and that was the way it was. Then he explained the significance of the All-Russian Communist *Subbotnik* and the international situation."

The Tryokhgornaya workers specially well remember Lenin's last visit in November 1921. "I heard Vladimir Ilyich in 1921," says M. I. Vasilyeva. "How well I remember the day. It was a holiday, but the weather was anything but holiday weather—wind and rain. In such weather people try to stay at home, but when they heard that Lenin would be there, they all came. There was an unprecedented crowd. I watched the crowd and missed one moment—that when Lenin appeared on the platform. The chairman was only able to say: 'Comrades, Vladimir Ilyich has arrived' before his voice was drowned in the noise. Everybody cheered Lenin to the echo. For a long time he could not begin to speak, so excited were the people at meeting our beloved Ilyich. When he began to speak, it became so quiet that it seemed you could have heard a pin drop."

V. Yemelyanov, V. Gorshkov and F. Rumyantsev, former Tryokhgornaya workers, tell how once Lenin was detained and A. M. Kollontai, a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, spoke in his place. The speaker, not noticing Lenin's arrival, for he came through a dark entrance and stood at one side, continued

to speak. Lenin, his coat thrown over his shoulders and his cap a little on one side, stood and listened to Kollontai. Someone in the hall noticed him. A worker offered him a seat, saying: "Sit down, Vladimir Ilyich. . . ." Lenin smiled, wrinkling up his eyes, and replied: "It's all right, I'll stand." Meanwhile a note was passed to Kollontai, and she quickly concluded her speech. "Ilyich, hastily throwing off his coat," recall Gorshkov and Rumyantsev, "mounted the rostrum. Putting his hand to his eyes, screwing up his face because of the light, he gazed round the hall. In it there were some 3,000 people. They were standing in all the gangways and sitting on the roof beams." This is how these two authors describe the close of the meeting: "At about 10 p.m. . . . the Tryokhgornaya workers accompanied Ilyich to his car. He shook hands in farewell with workers standing close to him, took off his cap, bowed, took his leave and . . . the car disappeared round the bend."

The workers particularly emphasize Lenin's close ties with the broad mass of the working people and his moving concern for ordinary people.

The former Tryokhgornaya weaver S. Malinkin in his recollections notes that "Lenin was daily and hourly linked with the broad mass of the workers. He was interested in everything that concerned their life and showed a moving anxiety for their needs."

The recollections of the Tryokhgornaya workers indicate Lenin's concern for the constant reinforcement of the alliance between the working class and the working peasants, which constitutes the decisive force of Soviet society. The recollections of Comrade Chernyak are of interest here: "In 1921 I was at a Tryokhgornaya meeting on the fourth anniversary of the October Revolution in Krasnaya Presnya.* The place—what was known as

* Krasnaya Presnya—a working-class district of Moscow, famous for its revolutionary traditions.—*Ed.*

the 'Kitchen,' spacious, with a low ceiling—was packed.

"All the chairs, tables and window-sills were taken. After a number of comrades—participants in the October Revolution—had spoken, the chairman got to his feet in the usual way and said: 'Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, member of the Moscow City Soviet from our mill, has the floor.' Immediately Lenin came on to the platform. The meeting became excited, it seethed; for a long time shouts and greetings prevented Ilyich from beginning. Women lifted up their children. The young people, pushing and jostling each other, clambered up on to window-sills and tables. With great difficulty the platform succeeded in calming the stormy pleasure which took hold of everybody at the appearance of the simple, modest and wise teacher and leader. Everybody listened with close attention. Firm bonds of mutual understanding, affection and devotion linked speaker and audience.

"The beloved leader spoke no sweet words, promised no easy victories. He told the hard truth about the difficulties of the struggle, about the need for sacrifices, and about the cunning and strength of the international bourgeoisie, which hated the power of the workers. But at the same time there was in his words a bold call to struggle, an awareness of the ultimate victory of the working class in alliance with the peasantry."

Lenin was permanently the Moscow City Soviet representative of the Tryokhgornaya workers.

In 1923, Comrades Simonov, Kosarev and other Tryokhgornaya workers went to the Kremlin to give Lenin his mandate as a City Soviet deputy. "We were with Vladimir Ilyich only a very short time—about five minutes," says S. Kosarev, "because he was very busy. He thanked us and said: 'I think that I shall justify your confidence.' "

The recollections of the workers show how profound and how strong were Lenin's ties with the broad mass of the working people. Unbounded love for ordinary people and boundless faith in their creative powers was always inherent in him. In these unbreakable ties with the masses lies the source of the strength and invincibility of the Communist Party he created.

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